Bill Schneider

COMPLETELY REVISED & EXPANDED 4th EDITION

The Hiker's Guide to MONTANA

Your introduction to 120 hikes in Montana's spectacular backcountry–Glacier National Park, the Bob Marshall, and Beartooths as well as little known areas throughout the state. New additions include Mann Gulch and several eastern plains hikes.

The Hiker's Guide to MONTANA

by

Bill Schneider

With assistance from thirty
veteran Montana hikers

FALCON™

Falcon Press® Publishing Co., Inc.
Helena, Montana

First revision, 1987, by Ed Madej
Second revision, 1990, by Ann Siefert
Third revision, 1994, by Russ Schneider

Falcon Press is continually expanding its list of recreational guidebooks using the same general format as this book. All books include detailed descriptions, accurate maps, and all information necessary for enjoyable trips. You can order extra copies of this book and get information and prices for other Falcon books by writing Falcon Press, P.O. Box 1718, Helena, MT 59624. Also, please ask for a free copy of our current catalog listing all Falcon Press books.

Copyright © 1994 by Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc.

First edition published in 1979.
Second edition published in 1983.
Third edition published in 1990.
Fourth edition published in 1994.

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or parts thereof, in any form, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Schneider, Bill.
The hiker's guide to Montana / by Bill Schneider, with the assistance of thirty veteran Montana hikers. -- 4th ed.
p. cm.
Rev. ed. of : The Hikers guide to Montana. 3rd ed. 1990.
ISBN 1-56044-270-0
1. Hiking--Montana--Guidebooks. 2. Backpacking--Montana--Guidebooks. 3. Montana--Guidebooks. I. Title.
GV199.42.M9H54 1994 93-45038
796.5'1'09786--dc20 CIP

Printed in the United States of America.

Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 1718, Helena, MT 59624

Cover photo by Bill Schneider

♻ Text pages printed on recycled paper.

ACKNOWLEGMENTS

Editing any book is lots of work, but editing this one would have been impossible without the kind help of so many people. First and foremost, I must thank the contributors who provided most of the hike descriptions. Without them, *The Hiker's Guide to Montana* would not be. Although their bylines follow their contributions, I want to acknowledge their help again by listing them here: Wayne Avants, Don Berg, Bill Brown, Pat Caffrey, Bruce Chesler, Mike Comola, Frank Culver, Bill Cunningham, Art Foran, John Gatchall, Herb Gloege, Linda and Tom Hurlock, Jack Johns, Kirk Koepsel, Loren Kreck, Ed Madej, Joe Mussulman, Dave Orndoff, Bob Oset, Don Reed, Karen Renne, Mike Sample, Greg and Russ Schneider, Elaine and Art Sedlack, Elaine Snyder, Fred Swanson, Larry Thompson, Bob Wagenknecht, Rosemary Rowe, John Westenberg, and Kim Wilson. If you bump into any of these good folks on a mountaintop somewhere, please thank them for making *The Hiker's Guide* possible.

Perhaps as important as the text are the excellent maps. For these, I thank Gary Wolf and Ed Madej. Larry Thompson provided the artwork for the title page.

Many of the photos are courtesy of the USDA Forest Service. I especially thank the helpful public servants at the Regional Forester's Office of Information in Missoula. However, the Forest Service personnel from ranger districts throughout Montana helped in various capacities. Other photos in the book come from the cameras of Bruce Chesler, Art Foran, Joe Mussulman, Doug O'looney, Ed Madej, Tom Hurlock, Harry Engels, and Mike Sample.

T&R Engraving of Denver did an excellent job with the difficult task of photographing topographic maps from the U.S. Geological Survey. And of course the USGS itself deserves thanks for making the maps in the first place and allowing their reproduction.

As you can see, it takes far more than an editor to complete such a project.
—Bill Schneider

CONTENTS

LOCATOR MAP x
FOREWORD 1
INTRODUCTION 3
- *Understanding the Hike Descriptions* 3
- *Maps* 4
- *Map Legends* 5
- *Touch the Land Lightly* 8
- *Hazards in the Backcountry—Make It a Safe Trip* 10
- *Survival Kit* 11
- *First-Aid Kit* 11
- *Hypothermia* 11
- *Hiking in Bear Country* 12
- *Should You Drink the Water?* 14
- *Insects* 14
- *Wood Ticks* 14
- *Lightning* 15
- *Wildfires* 15
- *Flash Floods* 15
- *Rattlesnakes* 15
- *Hiking with Children* 15
- *Hiking on Tribal Lands* 17
- *Montana Indian Reservations Map* 17
- *List of Montana Tribal Councils* 18

THE HIKES

Purcell Mountains, Yaak River Area 19
- 1 — *Northwest Peak* 19
- 2 — *Hoskins Lake* 21
- 3 — *Boulder Lakes* 23
- 4 — *West Branch of the South Fork of Big Creek* 25
- 5 — *East Branch of the South Fork of Big Creek* 27
- 6 — *Fish Lakes Canyon* 30
- 7 — *Parsnip Creek* 33
- 8 — *Roderick Mountain* 35

Cabinet Mountains Region 37
9 — *Pillick Ridge, Ross Creek* 37
10 — *Cedar Lakes Loop* 41
11 — *Baree and Bear Lakes* 44
12 — *Leigh Lake* 46
13 — *Murr Canyon* 49
Bitterroot Range 51
14 — *Hub Lake, Ward and Eagle Peaks* 51
15 — *Great Burn Loop* 54
16 — *Heart and Pearl Lakes* 56
17 — *Stateline Trail South* 58
18 — *Stateline Trail North* 60
19 — *Maclay Flats* 62
20 — *Peterson Lakes* 64
21 — *Blodgett Canyon* 66
22 — *Canyon Falls* 69
23 — *Trapper Peak* 71
24 — *Kerlee Lake* 73
25 — *Overwhich Falls* 75
26 — *Blue Joint* 77
Reservation Divide, Rattlesnake Wilderness 80
27 — *Three Lakes Peak* 80
28 — *Stuart Peak, Twin Lakes* 82
29 — *Boulder Lake* 85
Sapphire Mountains 87
30 — *Mount Sentinel* 88
31 — *Stoney Lake, Dome-Shaped Mountain* 90
32 — *Hope and Faith Lakes* 91
33 — *Welcome Creek* 94
Flint Creek Range, Anaconda Vicinity 97
34 — *Rainbow Lake* 97
35 — *Trask Lakes* 99
West Big Hole, Italian Peaks 101
36 — *Pioneer and High-up Lakes* 101

37 — *Selway Mountain* 105

38 — *Deadman and Nicholia Creeks* 107

Pioneer Mountains 111

39 — *Bobcat Lakes* 111

40 — *Sawtooth Lake* 113

41 — *Torrey Lake* 115

42 — *Grayling Lakes* 117

Tobacco Root Mountains 120

43 — *Hollowtop Lake* 120

44 — *Curly Lake Highline Trail* 122

45 — *Lake Louise* 125

Humbug Spires 128

46 — *Humbug Spires* 128

Snowcrest Range 130

47 — *Snowcrest Trail* 130

48 — *Sawtooth Mountain, Antone Pass* 132

Mission Mountains 135

49 — *Cold Lakes* 135

50 — *Mollman Lakes* 138

Swan Mountains-Jewel Basin Area 142

51 — *Morrell Falls* 143

52 — *Sapphire Lake* 143

53 — *Lion Creek* 148

54 — *Crater Lake* 150

55 — *Jewel Basin* 152

56 — *Alpine Trail, Columbia Mountain* 153

Great Bear Wilderness 155

57 — *Logan Creek* 155

58 — *Ousel Peak* 157

59 — *Great Northern* 160

60 — *Stanton Lake* 162

61 — *Marion Lake* 164

Whitefish Range 166

62 — *Mount Thoma* 166

63 — *Ten Lakes* 169
Glacier National Park 171
64 — *Nyack Loop* 171
65 — *Akokala Lake* 175
66 — *Trail of the Cedars* 177
67 — *Park Creek* 179
68 — *Pitamakan and Dawson Passes* 182
69 — *Iceberg Lake* 185
Rock Mountain Front, Scapegoat Wilderness 187
70 — *Gateway Pass, Gateway Gorge* 187
71 — *Our Lake* 192
72 — *Renshaw Mountain, Renshaw Lake* 194
73 — *Mount Wright* 197
74 — *Deep Creek, North Fork of the Sun River* 200
75 — *Devils Glen* 203
76 — *Halfmoon Park* 205
77 — *Alpine Park* 207
Gates of the Mountains Wilderness 209
78 — *Gates of the Mountains* 209
79 — *Mann Gulch* 214
80 — *Hanging Valley* 219
Elkhorn Mountains, Helena Vicinity 222
81 — *Red Mountain* 222
82 — *Spring Meadow Lake* 224
83 — *Mount Helena Ridge* 226
84 — *Little Blackfoot Meadows* 228
85 — *Manley Park* 230
86 — *Elkhorn and Crow Peaks* 233
87 — *Casey Peak* 236
Big Belt-Bridger Mountains 238
88 — *Boulder Basin* 239
89 — *Edith-Baldy Basin* 241
90 — *Sacajawea Peak* 243

Madison-Gallatin Ranges 245
91 — *Bear Trap Canyon* 245
92 — *Spanish Peaks* 248
93 — *The Helmet* 250
94 — *Lizard Lakes* 253
95 — *Hilgard Basin* 254
96 — *Coffin Lake* 257
97 — *Ramshorn Lake* 259
98 — *Hyalite Lake* 261
99 — *Emerald and Heather Lakes* 264
100 — *Pine Creek Lake* 267
Island Range 269
101 — *Beartrap Peak* 269
102 — *Middle Fork, Lost Fork of the Judith* 271
103 — *Big Snowies Crest* 275
104 — *Crazy Mountains* 278
105 — *Cottonwood Lake* 282
106 — *Highwood Baldy* 284
107 — *Bear Paw Baldy* 287
108 — *West Butte* 288
Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness 290
109 — *Elbow Lake, Mount Cowen* 291
110 — *Lake Pinchot* 292
111 — *Aero Lakes* 295
112 — *Rock Island Lake* 298
113 — *Tempest Mountain, Granite Peak* 299
114 — *Sundance Pass* 303
115 — *Spogen Lake Loop* 306
Eastern Montana 310
116 — *Bitter Creek Badlands* 310
117 — *Strawberry Hills* 312
118 — *Tongue River Breaks* 314
119 — *Buffalo Creek Wildlands* 316

120 — *Camps Pass Trail* 318

AFTERWORD

The Wilderness Challenge 319

APPENDIX I

Always Check the Checklist 321

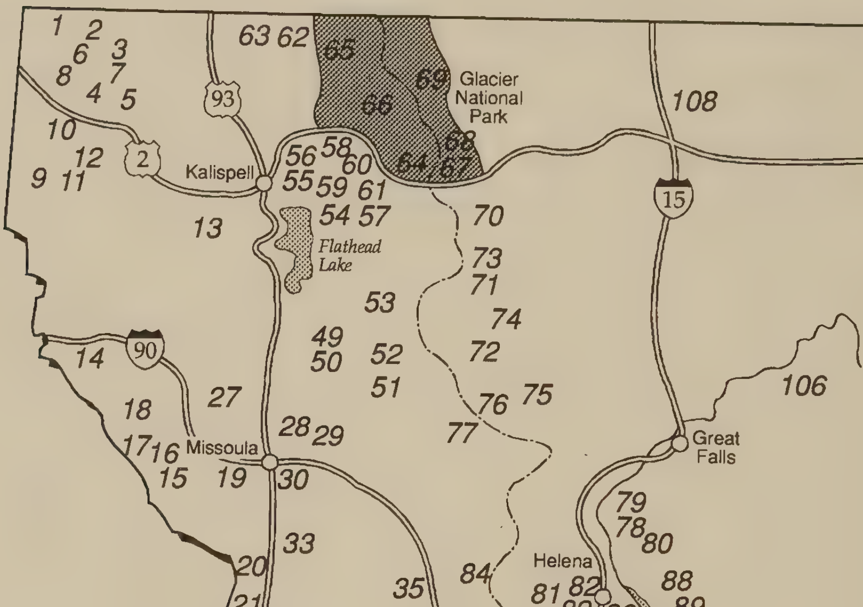
APPENDIX II

Finding Maps 323

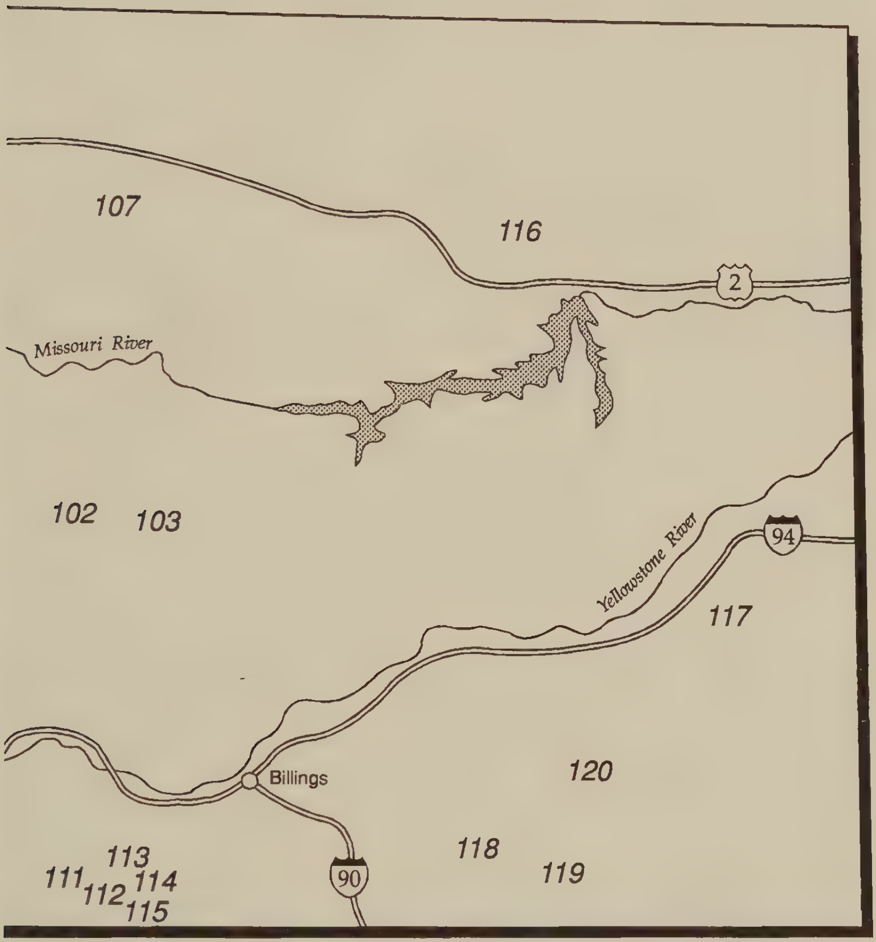
APPENDIX III

Conservation Organizations 323

HIKE LOCATIONS



1
2
6
3
8
7
4
5
63
62
65
66
69
Glacier National Park
108
93
10
2
12
9
11
Kalispell
56
58
60
55
59
61
64
68
67
15
54
57
70
13
Flathead Lake
73
71
53
74
49
50
52
72
90
14
27
51
106
76
75
18
28
29
77
Great Falls
17
16
Missoula
15
19
30
79
78
80
33
20
Helena
84
35
88
81
82
82
86
89
21
22
31
84
Butte
101
23
32
85
34
24
25
104
105
46
90
93
26
39
42
44
90
45
40
43
91
92
Bozeman
98
100
41
36
109
99
93
97
110
15
47
94
37
48
95
96
38


107
116
2
Missouri River
102
103
94
Yellowstone River
117
Billings
120
113
111
112
114
115
90
118
119

The lure of trout and spectacular scenery draws fishermen to the backcountry lakes of the Taylor-Hilgard area in the Madison Range. Mike Sample photo.

FOREWORD

Hiking Is for Everybody

Although we occasionally hear claims that only the young and the rich use wilderness, quite the reverse is true. Families spend many pleasurable nights camping far from their vehicles. And day hiking (or "walking for pleasure" as agencies sometimes call it) is undoubtedly one of the most popular forms of outdoor recreation.

The people who make such statements must do little if any hiking, or surely they would see young, old, large, small, rich, and poor—all thoroughly enjoying the backcountry trails. Hiking and backpacking are available to all ages, sexes, and sizes. They only require a small amount of physical conditioning (which everybody should have anyway) and a minimal amount of equipment.

That's right—a minimal investment. Like any other sport, hiking and backpacking can be expensive if you choose to make them so. On the other hand, they can be among the most economical forms of outdoor recreation—especially day hiking, which requires nothing but a pair of hiking shoes that probably are already in the closet.

Overnight trips are more expensive, but even they can be undertaken with a small investment. The cost of a two-week vacation involving motel stays and restaurant meals would be sufficient to outfit an entire family for backpacking. And the equipment could be used year after year. After that initial investment, you could see millions of acres of spectacular, roadless country without spending another penny on equipment. You would only need to spend a few dollars for food and for transportation to the trailheads, and after that the trips would be free.

Not only is hiking free in the economic sense, but it's also free of the stress and regulation of modern America. Once on the trail, you can forget (although only temporarily) the tension of your work, the Internal Revenue Service, the unpaid bills, the noise and pollution—it's all behind you for a few hours or days. You can't even hear the bad news on the radio.

Hiking provides an escape—a chance to smell the fragrance of wildflowers, to hear the wind whistling through mature pines, to see the sunset reflected in a mountain lake, to taste the waters of a gin-clear stream, to feel the tug of a native trout at the end of your fishing line.

All this and more is there for the taking, and in Montana it's there in abundance.

Of course, you can chart your own trails into Montana's wild country, based on the advice of local hikers or agency personnel or by searching through topographic maps. But within these pages are enough hikes for a lifetime of backcountry thrills. And by using this guide, you can save that much more time to enjoy the outdoors.

In this book, we've included hikes from almost every roadless portion of Montana. We describe trails through well-known areas, such as Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall and Mission Mountains wilderness areas. But we've also been careful not to forget the many splendid areas that haven't gained a national reputation—yet.

We've also included hikes for all kinds of hikers—beginners, families,

Backpacking clowns.. Bill Schneider photo.

experienced backpackers. In fact, many of the hikes are short day hikes well-suited for families or inexperienced hikers. There's bound to be a hike to suit your fancy and a trailhead to begin your adventure, and they're probably only a short drive away.

We believe this guide is particularly valuable because it includes the favorite hikes of a number of veteran Montana hikers, not just one. These people want to share with you the pleasure they've felt with each journey into the wilderness. In return, they hope you'll appreciate and fight to preserve wild Montana.

Happy hiking.—*Bill Schneider.*

INTRODUCTION

In Montana, the potential for hiking seems almost endless. So any hiking guide for the state can only include a small number of the hundreds—perhaps thousands—of spectacular hikes that exist. However, each of these hikes is an introduction to another hiking area; there are, of course, many more lakes, mountains, alpine basins, and trails in the area to lure you back another day.

The contributors to this guide have hiked these trails and recorded the directions in this book. But even more recent road or trail construction or natural phenomena might have changed something. That's why a source of updated information accompanies each hike.

Understanding the Hike Descriptions

The organization of each hike includes a general description, general location, maps, special attractions, difficulty, elevation gain and loss, season, and additional information sections. This preliminary information and the narrative hike description will help you decide which hikes to take.

The difficulty of each hike deserves particular attention. Several wheelchair accessible trails have been added to this edition. These are rated as Easy/Wheelchair Accessible, and have added information about trail surface conditions (paved, hard packed, gravel, boardwalk, etc.). Other hikes are rated as easy, moderate, or difficult. Easy hikes are usually relatively flat, short, and well marked. Moderate hikes are longer, require some navigational skills, and involve some steep grades. Most difficult hikes have strenuous sections, serious mileage, and may require cross-country navigation. To prevent a bad experience, only choose a difficult hike if you are in good condition and know how to navigate with a map and compass.

Elevation gain and loss figures are approximations, accurate within fifty feet. These figures are based on total elevation gain and total elevation lost during a hike. For example, a one-way hike ascended 1,000 feet, descended 750, ascended another 1,000 feet, and then descended 500 feet would have and elevation gain of 2,000 feet and an elevation loss of 1,250 feet. Especially in rugged terrain, such figures often indicate the strenuous nature of a hike more accurately than the overall difference between elevation gain and loss (in this example, 750 feet). Only one figure is listed if the hike only gains or only loses elevation. For example, if the elevation gain figure is 1,200 feet, then the hike is all uphill and gains 1,200 feet. On the return trip, the hike obviously loses 1,200 feet, which implies it is all downhill.

Season listings are designed to indicate the safest and most optimum season to take a given hike. In Montana, hikers have to contend with winter-like storms occurring anytime during the year, and snow lingering in the high country well into summer. Many hikes at high elevations are not accessible until July. Since conditions vary on a yearly basis, these listings are certainly not decisive. Check weather forecasts before beginning a hike and avoid stormy periods.

Some trailheads are located along major state highways, and others are found in very remote "backcountry" locations. Always be sure your vehicle is in good condition, especially if driving to remote trailheads via long dirt roads. Check your brakes, make sure you have plenty of fuel, and carry basic emergency equipment. A shovel, axe, saw, at least five gallons of water, and extra food and clothing should help you deal with a variety of unforeseen problems. If you're unsure about road conditions, check ahead with the appropriate agency.

Finally, remember that you don't need to hike the full distance of each hike. Simply choose a hike that appeals to you, and let your ability and desire dictate how far to go.

Maps

Many of the original maps in this guide are reproductions of sections of U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles and USDA Forest Service maps. They provide many details on the course of the hike. The newest hikes added to the guide follow a different map format, showing locations of trails, roads, and other landmarks. USGS Quads may not be necessary for the easy/wheelchair accessible hikes. But for all moderate and difficult hikes, topographic maps are recommended.

USGS topographic quadrangles have contour lines of the landscape and identify landmarks and landscape features such as lakes, streams, and peaks. The maps come as either 7.5-minute quadrangles or 15-minute quadrangles. The 7.5-minute quadrangles usually have contour intervals of forty feet, cover and area of approximately nine miles by seven miles, and are on a scale of 1:24000. One inch on the map is equivalent to 24,000 inches on the ground. The 15-minute quadrangles usually have contour intervals of eighty feet, cover an area of approximately fourteen by seventeen miles, and are on a scale of 1:62500.

Topographic maps are available at most backpacking and sporting goods stores, or can be ordered directly from the USGS. Standard topographic quadrangles are about $2.50, when ordered from the USGS, with $1.00 handling charge on all orders under $10. To order, simply list the maps needed in alphabetical order, indicate how many of each are needed, for which state (all Montana), the scale desired, and the price. Send orders to U.S. Geological Survey, Box 25286, Denver Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225.

Forest Service Travel Plan Maps have no contour lines, but focus on roads, lakes, peak, rivers, trails, and other major landmarks. They do have trail and road numbers for all current Forest Service roads and trailheads. These numbers are especially helpful in reaching the trailhead. But beyond the trailhead, a USGS quad map is necessary.

Forest Service Maps are available at most Montana national forest district offices or ranger stations. For example, you can send $3 per map to Helena National Forest, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena Montana 59601, or call (406) 449-5201 ext. 266 for more information. They will not send maps until receiving a check for the correct amount. No charge is made for shipping. Please specify the maps needed and the number of each.

Also, check your local library for a collection of topographic and Forest Service maps. Photocopies of these maps are just as good as the original if kept dry. They are also easier on your budget.

MAP LEGEND—
USDA Forest Service Map

Interstate	00
U.S. Highway	00
State Highway	(00)
County Route	(00)
Forest Route	000
Primary Highway	━━━━▷
Primary Access Route	▬▬▬▬▷
Improved Road	════▷
Primitive Road	=====▷
Trail	— — — — —
Railroad	┼┼┼┼┼┼
Power Line	•——•——•——•
Gate	•⁄•
Gauging Station	⊕
Mine	⚒
Dam	◡
Cave/Cavern	≺

Corral	⊂
Building	□
School/Church	⛿ ✝
Windmill	⧗
District Ranger Station	⬆
Forest Service Station	▶
Lookout Station	⬡
Horizontal Control Station	△
US Mineral/ Location Monument	▲
Landmark Object	⊙
Recreation Site	⛺
Point of Interest	◆
Sportsman's Access	▼
Trailhead	▽ 00
Ski Area	⛷
Forest Products	◓

—··—··—··—··—··—···

State Boundary

—-—-—-—-—-—-—-—-—

County Boundary

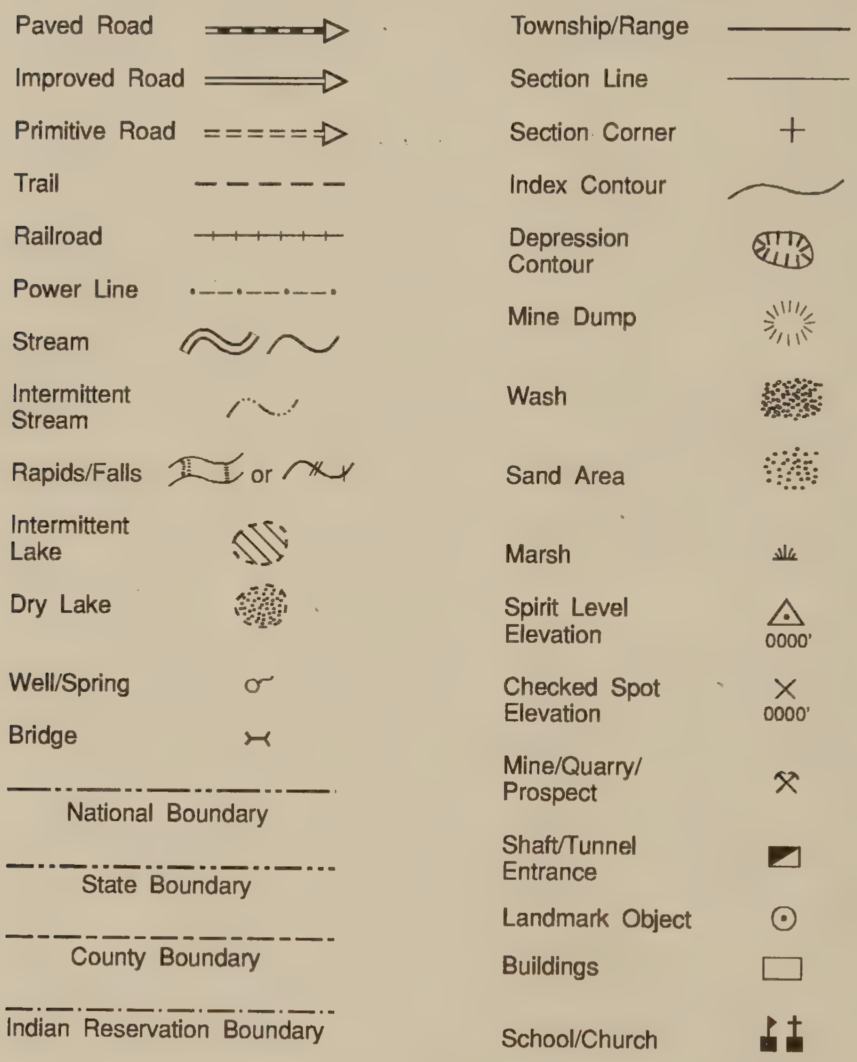
————————————

National Forest Boundary

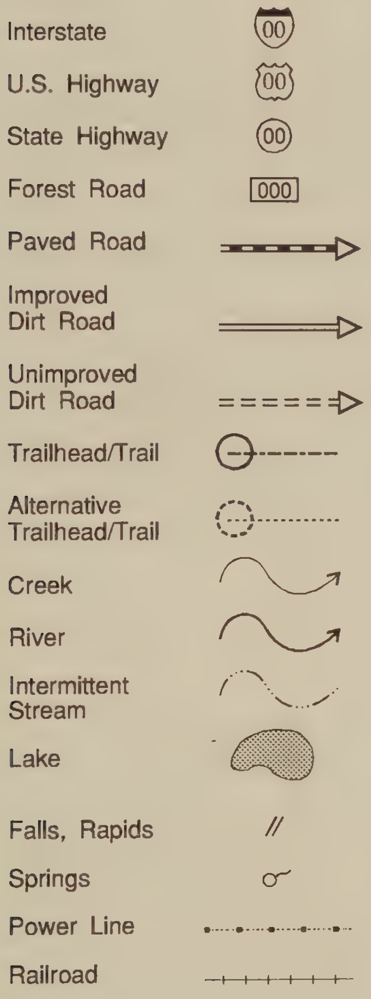
▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

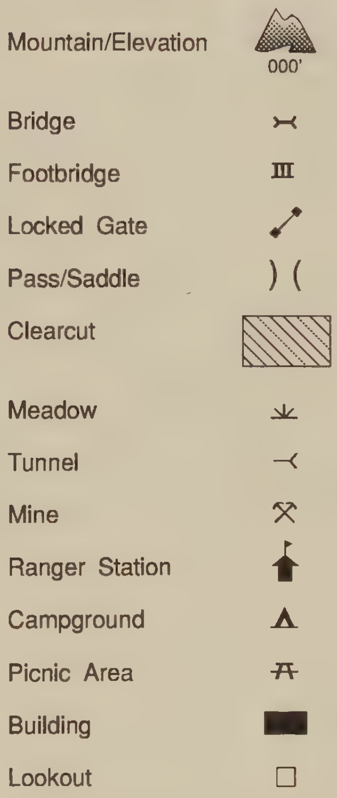
Wilderness Boundary

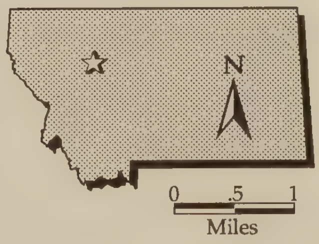
MAP LEGEND—USGS Quads


Paved Road
Improved Road
Primitive Road
Trail
Railroad
Power Line
Stream
Intermittent Stream
Rapids/Falls
or
Intermittent Lake
Dry Lake
Well/Spring
Bridge
National Boundary
State Boundary
County Boundary
Indian Reservation Boundary
Township/Range
Section Line
Section Corner
Index Contour
Depression Contour
Mine Dump
Wash
Sand Area
Marsh
Spirit Level Elevation
0000'
Checked Spot Elevation
0000'
Mine/Quarry/ Prospect
Shaft/Tunnel Entrance
Landmark Object
Buildings
School/Church

MAP LEGEND—Falcon Maps


Interstate
00
U.S. Highway
00
State Highway
00
Forest Road
000
Paved Road
Improved Dirt Road
Unimproved Dirt Road
Trailhead/Trail
Alternative Trailhead/Trail
Creek
River
Intermittent Stream
Lake
Falls, Rapids
Springs
Power Line
Railroad


Mountain/Elevation
000'
Bridge
Footbridge
Locked Gate
Pass/Saddle
Clearcut
Meadow
Tunnel
Mine
Ranger Station
Campground
Picnic Area
Building
Lookout



Touch the Land Lightly

Compare you favorite hiking area with your living room. You don't mind visitors. Often you invite them. But you want them to treat your home with respect.

If you have six obnoxious guests who put out cigarettes on the floor, spill drinks, and use foul language, your living room has, in your mind, exceeded its carrying capacity. And these visitors will leave lasting marks.

On the other hand, if you have a dozen quiet, polite, neat guests, the thought that your living room is being overused never enters your mind. And after the guests go home, there is no sign of their presence.

The same is true in the wilderness. It has a large capacity for human use as long as everybody behaves. But a few thoughtless or uninformed hikers can ruin the wilderness for others. An important addition to the checklist at the back of the guide is proper wilderness manners. Don't leave home without them.

All users of Montana's backcountry have a responsibility to know and follow all rules and regulations associated with public lands. These guidelines vary from national forests and Native American lands to national parks and national monuments, but the principles of low impact hiking should apply to all hiking areas.

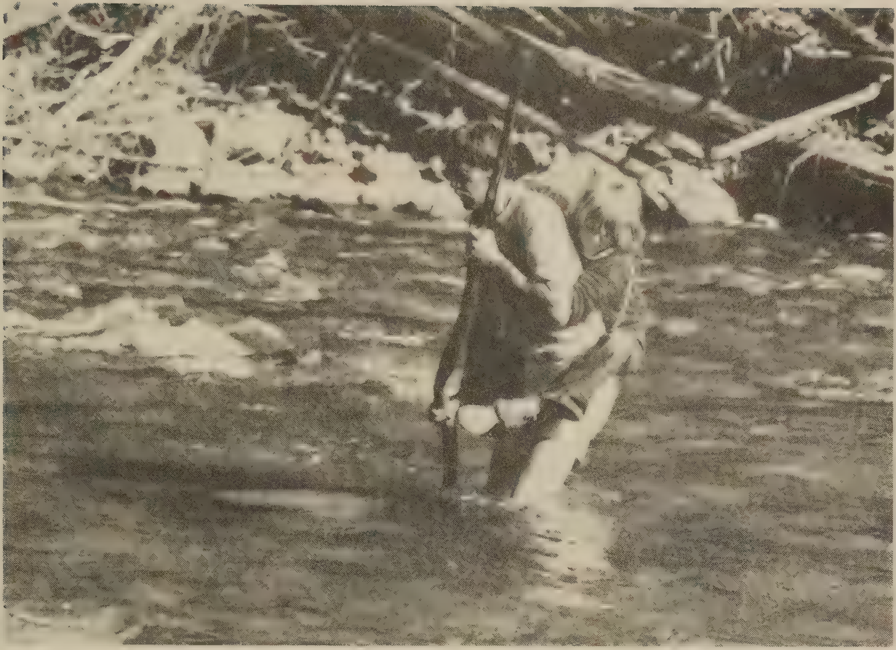
Most hikers treat wilderness gently, but some aren't aware that they have poor manners. Often, their actions are dictated by the outdated understanding of a past generation of campers who cut green boughs for evening shelters and beds, set up camp close to alpine lakes, built fire rings, and dug trenches around tents. In the 1950s, these "camping rules" may have been acceptable. But they leave long-lasting scars. Today, such behavior can no longer be tolerated. The wilderness is shrinking, and the number of hikers is mushrooming. Without question some camping areas show unsightly signs of this craze.

Thus, a new code of ethics is growing out of necessity to cope with the unending waves of hikers all wanting a perfect wilderness experience. As a general rule, touch the land as lightly as possible. Canoeists can look behind them and see no sign of their passing. The next canoe party has no idea another canoe is around the next bend. The same should be true of hiking and backpacking. Leave only the memories behind.

These days most of us know better than to litter—in or out of the wilderness. Be sure you leave nothing, regardless of how small it is, along the trail or at the campsite. This means you should pack out everything, including orange peels, flip tops, cigarette butts, and gum wrappers. Also, you may consider doing the area a good deed by picking up any trash that other hikers left behind.

Follow the main trail. Avoid cutting switchbacks and walking on vegetation beside the trail. And leave "souvenirs," such as rocks or wildflowers, for the next hiker to see; don't carry them out.

Backcountry trails are often marked by cairns or blazes. Cairns, small stacks of rocks, are most common in timberline or alpine areas. They mark obscure cross-country routes. Avoid building cairns when traveling cross-country. They are usually unnecessary and always detract from the wilderness experience. Blazes, usually the figure "i" carved into the bark of trees, are found along most maintained wilderness trails. But individuals should never blaze trees in the backcountry.



Fording a stream such as the Middle Fork of the Flathead is a backcountry hazard that requires extreme caution, especially when children are along. Bill Schneider photo.

Try to camp below timberline. Alpine areas are delicate and require special care. Often, it's only a short hike to a good campsite below timberline. Keep your camp away from a shoreline or stream bank. Between one hundred to two hundred yards is sufficient. Though in Montana, most established campsites border mountain lakes. If there is already an established campsite use it. One campsite has a large capacity for use and using it causes little additional damage. This saves the surrounding pristine areas. When fetching water, use established paths or vary your route if there are none.

Hikers seek solitude and silence. So avoid making loud noises that may disturb others. Remember, sound travels easily to the other side of the lake. Be courteous.

Be very careful with food wastes to prevent unsightly messes and bad odors. If fires are allowed where you're camping, burn food wastes. Throw cans and aluminum foil into the fire to burn off food scraps and odors. Then before breaking camp, dig them out of the ashes and pack them out. Likewise, burn fish viscera. If fires aren't allowed, place fish viscera or leftover food in plastic bags and carry it out. At least pack it to the next area where fires are allowed. Never throw fish viscera into mountain streams and lakes.

Pour waste water from boiling foods around the perimeter of your fire to keep it from spreading. This also protects natural vegetation. Wash dishes and clothing well away from streams and lakes. Pour dishwater in a small stump hole and cover when breaking camp. Never wash dishes in a mountain stream or lake. If you use soap make sure it's biodegradable.

As with food waste, be careful with human wastes. If you use toilet paper, burn it or carry it out. Thoroughly bury human wastes to avoid any chance of bad odor. This is a good reason to carry a lightweight trowel. Keep wastes away from lakes and streams.

Fires probably cause more damage to the backcountry than any other aspect of camping. Many areas discourage or prohibit fires. Avoid building fires in alpine areas where the surface is fragile and wood is scarce.

If a fire is allowed and is appropriate for the campsite, dig out the native vegetation and topsoil and set it aside. Don't build a fire ring with rocks. When breaking camp douse the fire thoroughly, scatter or bury the cold ashes, and replace the native soil and vegetation. Another acceptable method is to spread several inches of mineral soil (sand) on a flat rock to avoid fire-scarring the rock. Later scatter or bury the ashes and expose the rock, which should still look natural.

Build fires away from trees to prevent damage to root systems. Keep fires small and widely disperse any partially burned wood. Don't make a mess tearing apart trees to get firewood. Standing dead trees often are homes to many wild animals. Gather smaller fallen branches to burn. Don't use a saw or axe on a tree and leave a lasting scar.

Take a bath by jumping into the water and then climb out and move away from the water to lather yourself. Rinse off by pouring cans of water over your body away from your water source. This allows soap to biodegrade quickly as it filters through the soil. Use only biodegradable soap.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, strictly follow the pack-in pack-out rule. If you carry something into the backcountry, consume it, burn it, or carry it out.

Hazards in the Backcountry—Make It a Safe Trip

The Boy Scouts have been guided for decades by what probably is the best single piece of safety advice "BE PREPARED." For starters, this means carrying survival and first-aid equipment, compass, and topographic map—and knowing how to use them.

Perhaps the second-best advice is to tell somebody where you're going and when you plan to return. Pilots must file flight plans before every trip, and hikers would be smart to do the same. File your plan with a friend or relative before taking off.

Here are a few other helpful tips.

- Check the weather forecast and be especially careful not to get caught on a ridge during a lightning storm or at high altitude by a snowstorm. Avoid hiking during prolonged periods of exceptionally cold weather.
- Be extremely careful with fire.
- Never hike alone.
- Never split up in the backcountry.
- Withstand the temptation to swim across high mountain lakes.
- Don't hike down snowbanks with cliffs or rocks at the bottom.
- Know the symptoms and treatment of hypothermia, the silent killer.
- Study basic survival and first aid before leaving home.
- Don't eat wild mushrooms or other plants unless you are positive of their identification.
- Before you leave find out as much as you can about the hike, especially the potential hazards.
- Don't exhaust yourself or weaker members of your party by traveling to fast; let the slowest person set the pace.

- Stay on marked trail.
- Don't wait until you're confused to look at your maps. Follow them as you go along, from the moment you start moving up the trail.
- If you get lost, don't panic. Sit down and relax for a few minutes while you carefully check out your topographic map and take a reading with your compass. Confidently plan your next move. Thousands of hikers have spent unplanned nights in the woods and survived. If you've followed the rules and left your "flight plan" with somebody, they will be looking for you in the morning.
- If your hike calls for fording a large stream take special precautions to cross safely. Remove your socks and put your boots back on. Some hikers even use special sandals. This makes for more secure footing on the slippery stream bottom. Avoid the current's full force by keeping sideways to the flow. Slide-don't lift-your feet one at a time, making sure that one foot is securely anchored before seeking a new hold with the next one. Go slowly and deliberately. Some hikers also use a walking stick or branch for additional support.
- Lastly, stay clear of all wild animals, and this goes triple for bears. In Montana, bears—particularly grizzly bears—present a hazard not faced by hikers in most other states. If you learn about bears and use proper backcountry etiquette, bear country can be very safe. (See section on hiking in bear country.)

Survival Kit

It is important to have some emergency items. A survival kit should include: compass, whistle, matches in a waterproof container, candle, surgical tubing, emergency fishing gear (sixty feet of six-pound line, six hooks, six lead shot, and six trout flies), safety pins, copper wire, signal mirror, fire starter, aluminum foil, water purification tablets, space blankets, and flare.

First-aid Kit

Your first-aid kit should include: sewing needle, a snake-bite kit, aspirin, antibacterial ointment, two antiseptic swabs, two butterfly bandages, adhesive tape, four adhesive strips, four gauze pads, two triangular bandages, codeine tablets, two inflatable splints, moleskin, one roll three inch gauze, and lightweight first-aid instructions.

Hypothermia

Be aware of the danger of hypothermia—a condition in which the body's internal temperature has dropped below normal. It can lead to mental and physical collapse and death.

Hypothermia is caused by exposure to cold, and it's aggravated by wetness, wind, and exhaustion. The moment you begin to lose heat faster than your body produces it, you're suffering from exposure. Two things happen: you voluntarily exercise such as shivering to stay warm, and your body makes involuntary adjustments to preserve normal temperature in vital organs, restricting blood flow in the extremities. Both responses drain your energy reserves. The only way to stop the drain is to reduce the degree of exposure.

The second step is full-blown hypothermia. If exposure continues until your energy reserves are exhausted, cold reaches the brain, depriving you of judgement and reasoning power. You won't be aware that this is happening. You will lose control of your hands. Your internal temperature will slide downward. Without treatment, this slide leads to stupor, collapse, and death.

To defend against hypothermia stay dry. When clothes get wet, they lose about ninety percent of their insulating value. Wool loses relatively less heat; cotton, down, and some synthetics lose more. Choose rain clothes that cover the head neck, body, and legs, and provide good protection against wind-driven rain.

Understand cold. Most hypothermia cases develop in air temperatures between thirty and fifty degrees Fahrenheit.

If your party is exposed to wind, cold, and wet, think hypothermia. Watch yourself and others for these symptoms: Uncontrollable fits of shivering; vague, slow, slurred speech; memory lapses; incoherence; immobile, fumbling hands; frequent stumbling or a lurching gait; drowsiness (to sleep is to die); apparent exhaustion; and inability to get up after a rest.

When a member of your party has hypothermia, they may deny any problem. Believe the symptoms, not the victim. Even mild symptoms demand treatment:

- Get the victim out of the wind and rain.
- Strip off all wet clothes.
- If the victim is only mildly impaired, give warm drinks. Get the person into warm clothes and a warm sleeping bag. Placing well-wrapped, warm (not hot) rocks or canteens close to the victim will help.
- If the victim is badly impaired, attempt to keep them awake. Put the victim in a sleeping bag with another person-both stripped.. If you have a double bag, put two warm people in with the victim.
- Build a fire to warm the camp.—*USDA Forest Service*

Hiking in Bear Country

This section, compiled from interviews with authorities on bears and reviews of most of the literature on the subject, contains the basic information necessary to make hiking in bear country as safe as possible.

General: Be cautious and alert. Never hike in bear country alone. Watch for bear signs and be extra careful if you find any. Leave your dog home; it may be "man's best friend" at home but not in the wilderness where it could attract a grizzly. Report all bear incidents to local authorities.

Hiking: If you see a bear at a distance, make a wide detour around it on its upwind side so that it can get your scent. If a detour is not possible, slowly back down the trail until safely out of the bear's sight. Then make lots of noise (the more, the better) and slowly make your way up the trail again. The bear should be gone when you get back to your earlier observation point. If the bear is still there and you can't safely get around it abandon your route.

Make noise while hiking to help scare away bears. Many hikers hang bells, cans of pebbles, or whistles from their packs or belts. Metallic noise seems more effective than human voices, which can be muffled by natural conditions. Metallic noise is only made by humans and stands out from natural sounds. Also it is difficult to keep up steady conversation during long hikes.

Camping: Be careful with food and garbage. Keep a clean camp. Don't camp in a site obviously frequented by bears. If you see a bear or fresh signs of one where you intended to camp pick another campsite.

If possible, camp near tall trees that can easily be climbed. Sleep at least one hundred yards from your campfire and cooking area. In bear country, always hang your food and garbage on a cache pole if one is available. Though if you are not in a national park, a cache pole is not likely. In that case, suspend your food on a rope fifteen feet above ground between two trees twenty feet apart. The National Park Service recommends that the bag be at least six feet from each tree and ten feet above ground. These distances are good guidelines for hanging your food and garbage.

Keep food odors off clothes, tents, and sleeping bags. Avoid fresh, perishable, or ''smelly foods,'' such as bacon, lunch meat, sardines, etc.

The smell of fish can attract bears, so don't clean fish near camp. Burn fish entrails if possible. Camping at popular fishing sites requires extra caution.

Burn combustible trash if regulations and natural conditions allow open fires. Burn cans and other incombustibles to remove odors. Then dig them out of the ashes and pack them out. Never bury trash in the backcountry. Bears will dig it up. If you can carry it in, you can carry it out.

Special precaution for women: Some people recommend women stay out of bear country during menstrual periods. But that may not be possible so take common sense precautions; bears are attracted by odors. Keep yourself as clean and odor free as possible.

- Use pre-moistened, unscented cleaning towelettes.
- Use tampons instead of pads.

Do not bury used tampons or pads. A bear could smell them and dig them up. Used tampons or pads will provide a small food ''reward'' and may attract bears to other women menstruating.

Place all used tampons, pads, and towelettes in double air-tight bags and store them with other garbage away from bears.

Both men and women should avoid using perfume, hair spray, deodorants, and other cosmetics. There is some evidence that bears are attracted and even infuriated by these scents.

The confrontation: Remember that a bear will try to avoid contact with humans, so if you meet a bear along the trail the odds are good that it will turn and flee. But in the event of a human-bear confrontation, the best course of action is to talk in a firm, unexcited voice to the bear while slowly backing away. Do not attempt to run away from the bear, as this action may cause the bear to identify you as prey and give chase. With a top speed of forty miles per hour, a grizzly can certainly catch a running person if it tries.

Climbing a tree is a means of escape if an appropriate tree is nearby and one has enough time to do so (which is usually not the case). Playing dead, curling into a ball face-down and covering the neck and stomach-should only be used as a last resort after the bear has decided to attack. This takes courage, to say the least, but it's preferable to mortal wounds.

Publisher's note: Keep in mind these are merely general rules. They're probably the best, but, as always, it is dangerous to generalize. Certainly, there is no concrete formula for avoiding confrontations or for what to do when confronted. Dr. Charles Jonkel, a wildlife biologist and one of the nation's leading experts on grizzlies, suggests trying to evaluate each individual situation based on these general rules. And by all means, Jonkel emphasizes, ''Try to avoid an encounter.'' It is far easier to avoid a bear encounter than get out of one.

Giardia lamblia—Should you drink the water?

Few backpacking pleasures can top a cool drink from a high-country lake or stream. Whether on a day hike close to a large metropolitan area or miles into the backcountry, a refreshing sip along the trail is a tradition. Unfortunately, that sip may be hazardous to your health.

Most people who drink untreated backcountry water in Montana will not contract any symptoms of intestinal illness. But *Giardia lamblia*, a single-celled microscopic parasite, has been earning a lot of attention in recent years as the culprit causing intestinal disease among backpackers.

All hikers should take appropriate steps to insure water is pure. Rapidly boiling water for at least five minutes (at sea level) is the surest way to kill Giardia and other water-borne microorganisms. Since water boils at a slightly cooler temperature at high elevations, maintain the boil for at least ten minutes.

Other purification methods involve adding tincture of iodine or a saturated solution of iodine, and various water purification tablets are readily available at backpacking and sporting goods stores. Many types of water filters do a good job of purifying water. These filters are probably the safest choice next to boiling. Of course, the best protection is to pack water from the faucet, but this is difficult for long hikes. If you use backcountry water be aware of the source. Snow melt is better than a marsh upstream. Always draw upstream from the trail.

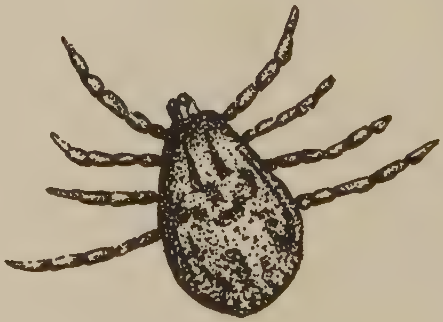
If you become ill within three weeks of a backcountry visit see a physician.

Insects

Don't let insects bug you. They are unavoidable but not unbeatable in the backcountry, especially in June and July at higher elevation. The most common nuisance to hikers is the persistent mosquito. Your best line of defense is to anticipate annoying insects on any hike and carry a good insect repellent. Consider using a natural insect repellent. Products containing citronella are quite effective, and can make forays into bug-infested terrain tolerable, even enjoyable

Wood Ticks

Ticks are fairly common throughout wooded brushy and grassy areas of Montana. They are most active from March until early summer. All ticks are potential carriers of Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The western black-legged tick, only ⅛-inch long, is responsible for transmitting Lyme Disease, a bacterial infection named for the Connecticut town where it was first recognized.



These diseases are transmitted to humans and other mammals by the bite of an infected tick.

Your best defense against hosting a tick is to avoid areas infested with ticks, wear clothing with a snug fit around the waist, wrists, and ankles. Layers of clothing are most effective in keeping ticks from reaching the body. And since ticks do not always bite right away (they often crawl around on a potential host for several hours before deciding where to feed on a victim's blood), a strong insect repellent can also be an effective deterrent against tick bites.

Lightning

Lightning is perhaps the most dangerous and frightening aspect of summer storms. Do not be caught on a ridge or a mountain top, under large, solitary trees, in the open, or near open water during a lightning storm. Try to seek shelter in a low-lying area ideally in a dense stand of small, uniformly sized trees. Stay away from anything that might attract lightning, such as metal tent poles, or pack frames.

Wildfires

If you start a fire, you are responsible for keeping your fire under control at all times and will be held accountable for the costs of fighting any fire and for any damage resulting from carelessness. Those costs can be enormous. Montana usually has hot dry periods during the summer. Be extra careful if the fire danger is high. Check with the respective Forest Service office for more information on fire danger and restrictions.

If there is a fire in an area, consider that area off limits to hiking.

Flash Floods

In Montana where summer thunderstorms are common, rain can cause flooding suddenly. Never camp in the immediate floodplain or canyon bottom of a river. Also, heavy rains may wash out dirt roads or make them undrivable. Watch the weather patterns in your area carefully.

Rattlesnakes

Never kill rattlesnakes unnecessarily. Rattlesnakes are an important segment of the ecosystem. If you encounter a rattler sunning itself on the trail, given a chance it will often attempt to escape. But be wary. Rattlers won't always give warning before striking.

Rattlesnakes are more common in eastern Montana near water sources below 6,000 feet but have been found in range as high as 8,000 feet. Watch where you put your hands and feet in snake country, especially when stepping over logs or climbing in rocky areas. Always carry a snake bite kit and familiarize yourself with its use.

Hiking with Children

With the birth of a child, some new parents might think their hiking and backpacking days are over, at least until Junior is old enough to walk several miles and carry a pack. But parents who forego hiking trips during a child's formative years are not only missing out on some of the most rewarding and memorable experiences to be enjoyed as a family, but the kids will also miss a tremendous learning experience in which they will gain confidence and a growing awareness of the world around them.

Children between the ages of two and six are heavy to carry and don't have the stamina to walk. Let them hike for awhile, then carry them again. At about age six, children will start hiking longer distances and will be ready to carry a pack. Daypacks, fannypacks, and even children's backpacks can be purchased at most sporting goods stores. Start out easily with lightweight personal items like a treasured and durable toy, clothing, toothbrush, cup, and snacks. Eventually, add a sleeping bag and some food.

If the child has not been introduced to the wilderness in early years, motivation may be your most difficult task. A child often does not understand the purpose of leaving the security of home, television, video games, and friends for a tiring walk with "nothing to do." You can prevent or modify negative attitudes by introducing education about nature and outdoor activities at an early age (in advance of planning a particular trip).

Kids can enjoy the backcountry as much as their parents, but they see the world from a different perspective. It's the little things adults barely notice that are so special to children: bugs scampering across the trail, spider webs dripping with dew, splashing rocks into a lake, watching sticks run the rapids of a mountain stream, exploring animal tracks in the mud—these are but a few of the natural wonders kids will enjoy while hiking backcountry trails. Help children enjoy and learn from the hike by pointing out special things along the trail. Make the hike fun, help kids to stay interested, and they will keep going.

Let the young ones set the pace. Until they get older and are able to keep up with their parents forget about that thirty-mile trek to your favorite backcountry campsite. Instead, plan a destination that is only a mile or two from the trailhead. Kids tire quickly and become easily sidetracked, so don't be surprised if you don't make it to your destination. Plan alternative campsites enroute to your final camp.

Teach children as early as possible what to do if lost. Giving children a whistle and attiring them in bright clothing will also aid in finding them. Other survival skills, such as navigating and fire building should be taught as early as possible. Get them accustomed to paying attention to where they are and where they are going—note such things as streams, clearings, and the number of side canyons on the route.

Take care of your children's feet just like you would your own. Boots are expensive and borrowed ones might not work. Good athletic shoes are preferable. Be certain to check their feet for blisters and use moleskin on potential trouble spots.

Careful planning, which stresses safety, will help make your outing an enjoyable one. Young skin is very sensitive to the sun, so always carry a strong sunscreen and apply it to your kids before and during your hike. A good bug repellant, preferably a natural product, should be standard part of the first-aid kit. Also consider a product that takes the itch and sting out of bug bites. A hat keeps the sun out of sensitive young eyes. Rain gear and ample clothing is important. Kids seem to have less tolerance to cold than adults. Using a stocking cap for those cool nights in the sleeping bag will help keep the young ones warm.

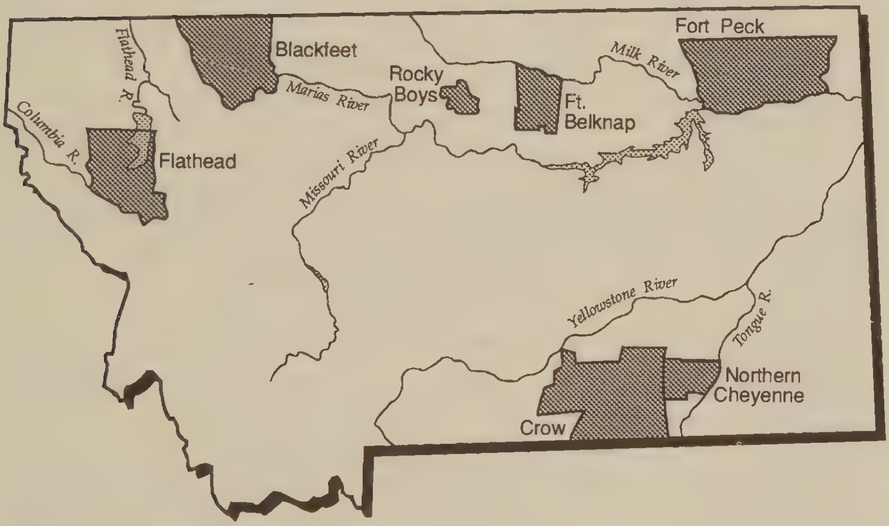
Kids may become bored more easily once you arrive in camp, so a little extra effort may be required to keep them occupied. Imaginative games and special foods they don't see at home can make the camping trip a new and fun experience for kids and parents both.

Children learn from their parents by example. Hiking and camping trips are excellent opportunities to teach young ones to tread lightly and minimize their imprint upon the environment.

Thus, important considerations to keep in mind when hiking with the kids are careful planning, stressing safety, and making trips fun and interesting.

Hiking on Tribal Lands

Montana has seven Indian reservations. These lands, set aside for the exclusive use of the various Native American tribes, range in size from the vast Crow Reservation, with 1.5 million acres to the isolated Rocky Boy's Reservation, with 107,000 acres. Each reservation governs its lands by an elected tribal council. Each reservation determines rules and regulations that control behavior of non-tribal visitors, thus hiking and camping regulations will vary from reservation to reservation.


Flathead R.
Blackfeet
Fort Peck
Milk River
Rocky Boys
Marias River
Ft. Belknap
Columbia R.
Flathead
Missouri River
Yellowstone River
Tongue R.
Northern Cheyenne
Crow

Native American lands in Montana should be considered private land. And, just like hunting on a rancher's or farmer's land, be grateful for having permission. Most tribal lands in Montana are open to hikers, but not necessarily advertised. The tribal councils of Montana's reservations are first obligated to their people. When hiking on tribal lands leave no trace and respect tribal guidelines. To fish on tribal lands, it is necessary to purchase a reservation fishing permit.

Some areas are closed to hiking for sacred purposes or tribal member use only. If you wish to hike on a reservation, you must first contact the tribal office for a permit or permission. The least some reservations require is that they know when and where you plan to hike. The most required is the purchase of a reservation hiking permit.

The following is a list of tribal addresses and a map on the previous page shows the approximate locations of each.

Blackfeet Tribal Business Council
P.O. Box 850
Browning, MT 59417
(406)338-7521

Chippewa-Cree Business Committee
(Rocky Boy's Reservation)
Box Elder, MT 59521
(406) 395-4207

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal Council
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855
(406) 675-2700

Crow Tribal Council
P.O. Box 159
Crow Agency, MT 59022
(406) 638-2601

Fort Belknap Community Council
P.O. Box 249
Harlem, MT 59526
(406) 353-2205

Fort Peck Executive Board
P.O. Box 1027
Poplar, MT 59255
(406) 768-5311/5155

Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council
P.O. Box 128
Lame Deer, MT 59043
(406) 477-6284

THE HIKES

The Purcell Mountains, Yaak River Area

Overview

The Purcell Mountains and the Yaak River region north of Libby is bordered by Lake Koocanusa on the east, U.S. Highway 2 on the south, Idaho on the west, and Canada to the north. It is part of the Kootenai National Forest. Great tongues of glacial ice flowed south from British Columbia thousands of years ago, creating these deep valleys and islands of mountains. The ice completely covered the Purcell Mountains here giving them a rounded less jagged appearance than other glacially shaped mountain ranges.

The precipitation in this area supports rapidly growing forests with fifteen species of conifers—including Douglas-fir, Englemann spruce, larch, giant hemlock, and western redcedar. Not surprisingly, this area produces a large percentage of the state's timber. Logging pressures continue to threaten the pristine hiking opportunities remaining here.

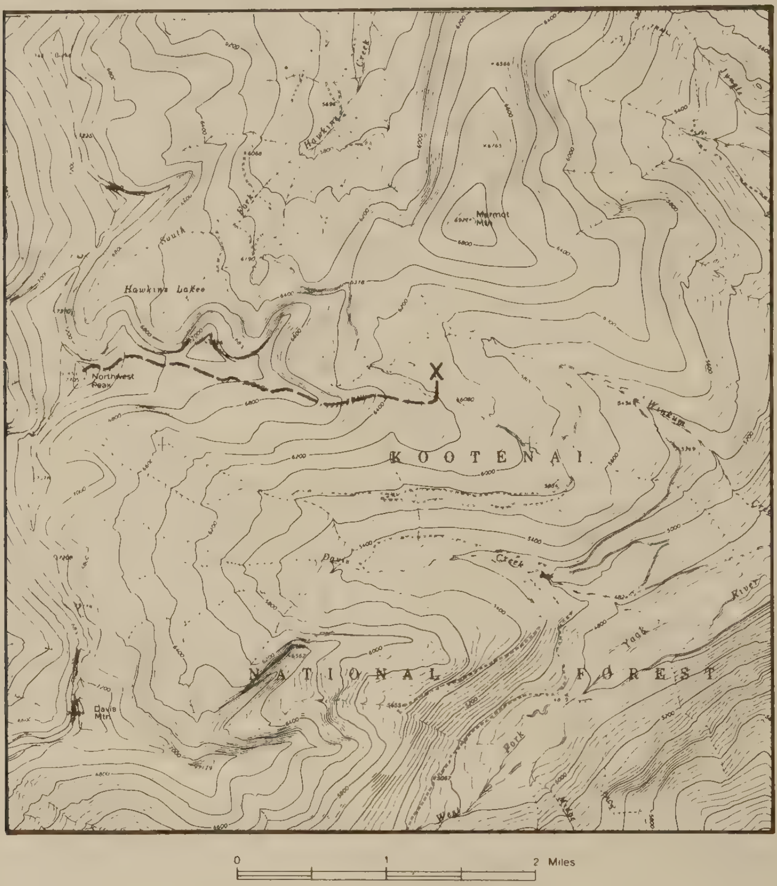
Protection of the remaining roadless lands in the Yaak River Valley and the Purcell Mountains is a high priority for state wildlife managers. An increasing amount of roads has damaged the health of the diverse wildlife populations native to this region. This area has been a focal point in the debate over the recovery of the grizzly bear and gray wolf. Conservationist fear the extinction of the grizzly without the protection of remaining roadless lands.

Most of the roadless areas left have trails for hikers with perfect opportunities for seeing wildlife. Old-growth western redcedar reach four to six feet in diameter in some places. Luckily, the native cutthroat and rainbow trout spawning grounds have been damaged only slightly by sediment from logging.

HIKE 1 NORTHWEST PEAK

General description: An easy, scenic, uphill walk for almost anyone.
General location: 40 miles north of Libby in the northwestern corner of the state, 3.5 miles from Idaho, and 2.5 miles from Canada.
Maps: Northwest Peak USGS Quad and Kootenai National Forest Map, Yaak Ranger District.
Special attractions: An old lookout cabin on the peak, views of the Northwest Peak Scenic Area and, on a clear day, the Canadian Rockies.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,615 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1437 N. Highway 2, Troy, MT 59935, or call (406) 295-4693.

The hike: Northwest Peak (elevation 7,705 feet) is the central attraction of


Hawkins Creek
South Fork
Hawkins Lakes
Marmot Mtn
Northwest Peak
X
KOOTENAI
NATIONAL
FOREST
Winkum Creek
Davis Creek
Yaak River
West Fork
Davis Mtn
0
1
2 Miles

a high mountain ridge, the most striking portions of which are included in the Northwest Peak Scenic Area, an official designation of the Forest Service. Under this designation, the area's unique qualities are recognized and protected. The area is seldom visited simply because most people have never heard of it. Those who have hesitate to drive that far. But it's a great opportunity if you're in northwestern Montana with half a day to kill.

The main access, Pete Creek Road #338, heads north off Montana Highway 508 two miles west of Yaak. After finding this paved road, drive thirteen miles north and then turn left (west) onto the West Fork Road. After two miles, turn right onto the Winkum Creek Road and climb for seven miles. At 6,100 feet, you'll find the trailhead on the left (south) side of the road at the edge of a clearcut.

There are streams farther up the road if you want fresh mountain water; there isn't any on the trail. This area usually has more than its share of snow, so wait until July to conquer Northwest Peak.

The trail follows a skid trail through the clearcut for about one-fourth of a mile before slipping into deep timber. The trail is well-marked, so it's easy to follow.

The trail climbs for two miles to the top of the peak, the last quarter of a mile across open, talus rock. At the top is an old, unmanned lookout cabin, complete with rusty pans and other nostalgic artifacts. The terrain drops down to alpine lakes on three sides of the peak.

The ridge top to the south is inviting, if you have time. The views are extensive, with the Cabinet Mountains to the south and the Canadian Rockies far to the north.

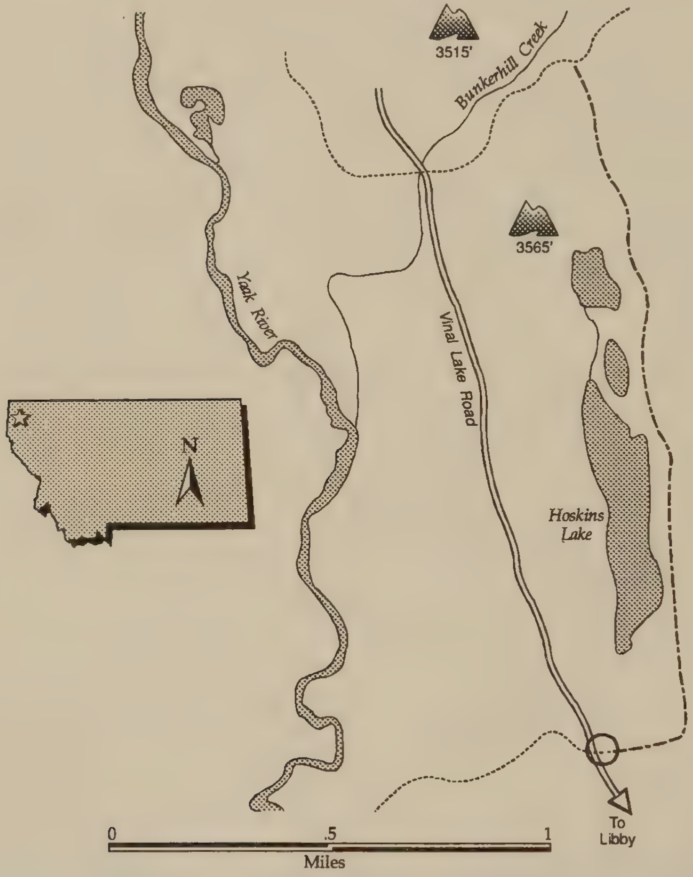
Northwest Peak is an easy place to pass the time if you're not in a hurry to do something or go somewhere.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 2 *HOSKINS LAKE*

General description: An easy round-trip to a mountain lake.
General location: 35 miles north of Libby in the Purcell Mountains.
Maps: Bonnet Top USGS Quad (somewhat outdated) and Kootenai National Forest Map, Yaak Ranger District.
Special attractions: A low-elevation, mountain lake with good fishing accessible by a short, well-maintained trail.
Difficulty: Easy.

Hoskins Lake. Tom Hurlock photo.

HIKE 2 *HOSKINS LAKE*



Elevation gain: 152 feet.
Season: Late May through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1437 N. Highway 2, Troy, MT 59935, or call (406) 295-4693.

The hike: Take the Pipe Creek Road north of Libby for about thirty-three miles until the road forks right to Vinal Lake. Take Vinal Lake Road #746 (which isn't shown on Bonnet Top USGS Quad) for about nine miles, or until you're about three miles past Vinal Creek. Here, you'll find Forest Service Trail #162 to Hoskins Lake on the right side of the road.

Vigorous hikers probably won't consider this a "hike," as it's less than half a mile to Hoskins Lake. However, for small children or less experienced hikers, it's perfect for an enjoyable day hike or camp-out. You can reach the lake in only five minutes if you don't stop to smell the wildflowers.

There's plenty of water along the well-maintained trail. There are no steep hills or hazards, and the chance of encountering bears is almost nonexistent.

Mosquitoes can take some of the fun out of this hike in the early summer; it's best to wait until late summer or fall to see Hoskins Lake.

There are actually two lakes—a larger lower lake with nice-sized cutthroat trout and a small, marshy, upper lake. Because of the good fishing, the lower lake is more heavily used—but not overused—mostly by local hikers. However, the upper lake offers an excellent opportunity to be alone in the wilderness.

Surrounding the lakes is a western larch forest with some very large trees. Deer and moose are frequently seen. Grouse are common, and if you're lucky you might spot an osprey or common loon near the lower lake. Some of the more common wildflowers include wake robin, shooting star, wild rose, Pacific trillium, queencup, and rock clematis.

A few hikers continue north past the lakes and go down Bunker Hill Creek. Simply follow this trail past the upper lake and stay with it for about a mile until it joins the trail up Bunker Hill Creek. Then turn left, ignoring the unmaintained trail that goes to the right up Bunker Hill Creek. This makes a loop, since you come back to Vinal Lake Road about 1.5 miles north of the Hoskins Lake trailhead.

Although this is rarely an overnight hike, there are several good campsites. There's a developed Forest Service site at the lower end of Hoskins Lake. However, most backpackers prefer camping at the wooded Forest Service campsite halfway up the lake where the fishing is better. You can also camp at the foot of Upper Hoskins Lake, about one hundred feet west of the trail. This spot gets little use, as it isn't a Forest Service campsite.

The Hoskins Lake area has been designated a Research Natural Area with the goal of preserving its uniqueness.—*Linda and Tom Hurlock*

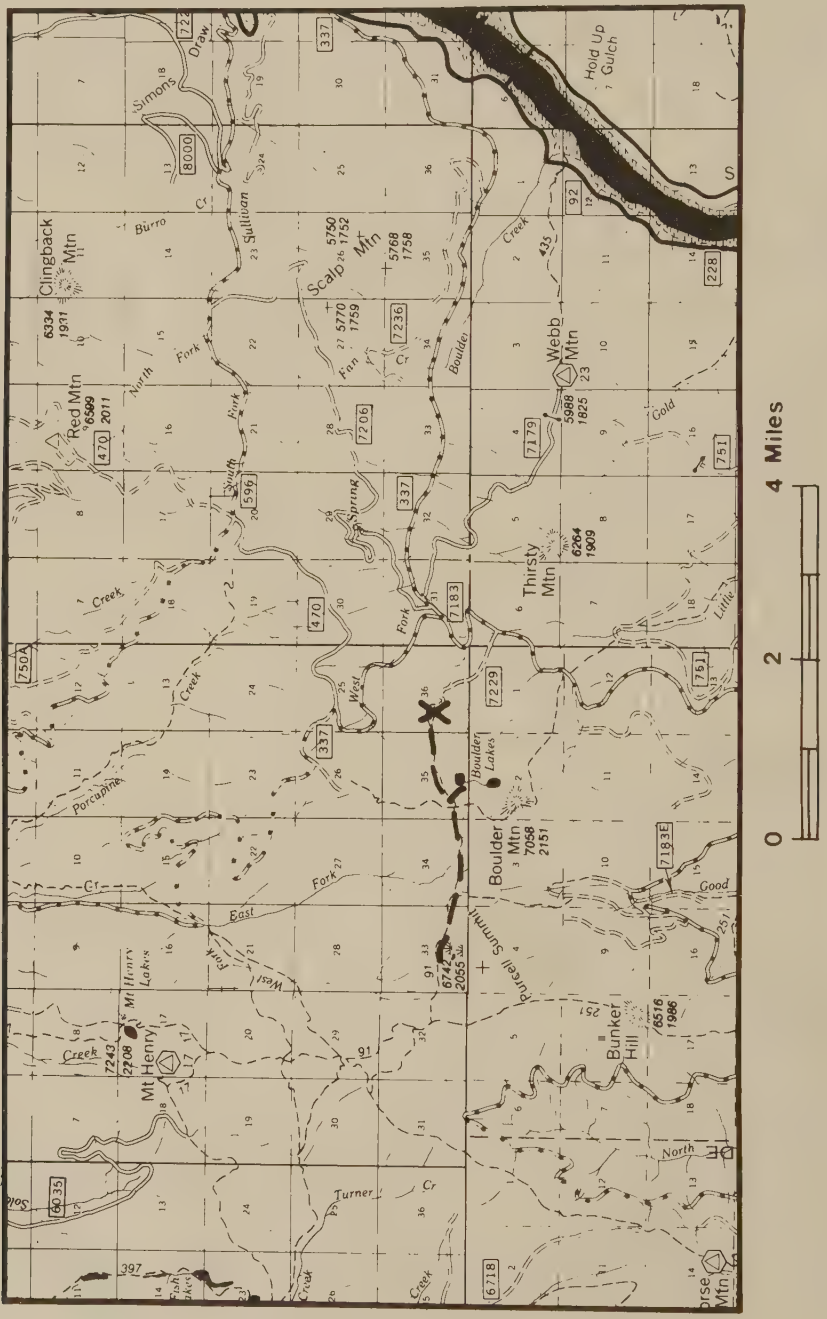
HIKE 3 *BOULDER LAKES*

General description: A short, easy hike into an area with two subalpine lakes.
General location: 30 miles north of Libby or seven miles west of the bridge across Lake Koocanusa.
Maps: Boulder Lakes USGS Quad (outdated) and Kootenai National Forest Map, Rexford Ranger District.
Difficulty: Easy
Elevation gain: 1,000 feet.
Elevation loss: 900 feet.
Season: Late June through August.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rexford Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1299 Highway 93 North, Eureka, MT 59917, or call (406) 296-2536.

The hike: If you want to see a subalpine lake without vehicle access, this may be the easiest hike you could take. It's only about 1.5 miles to the Lower Boulder Lake along a slight incline—about 440 feet elevation gain.

To locate the trailhead, go west from Eureka for about fourteen miles on

HIKE 3 *BOULDER LAKES*



Clingback Mtn
6334
1931
Red Mtn
6589
2011
Scalp Mtn
5750
1752
5768
1758
5770
1759
Webb Mtn
5988
1825
Thirsty Mtn
6264
1909
Boulder Mtn
7058
2151
Boulder Lakes
6742
2055
Mt Henry
7243
2208
Mt Henry Lakes
Bunker Hill
6516
1986
Hold Up Gulch
Simons Draw
Burro
Sullivan Cr
North Fork
South Fork
Fan Cr
Spring
Boulder Cr
West Fork
East Fork
Porcupine Creek
Creek
Summit
Purcell
Turner Cr
Good
Gold
Little
North
Fish Lakes
Creek
722
337
8000
470
596
7236
7206
7179
92
435
228
751
750A
7183
7229
7183E
251
91
6035
397
6718
0
2
4 Miles

Montana Highway 37 over the Lake Koocanusa Bridge and then turn north at the end of the bridge. Continue north for about three miles until you turn left on the Boulder Creek Road #337. Stay on this logging road for about nine miles until you see the road to Red Mountain. Take the left fork here, go about two miles past the junction, and turn right on Forest Road #7229 half a mile past a sharp switchback. Follow this road for 1.5 miles until it ends and Trail #62 takes off to the right. (If you find yourself driving on the level for miles, you've missed the last road junction, as the road levels off after the turnoff to Boulder Lakes.)

The trail is well-maintained, and after a quarter of a mile it stays in the woods all the way. Just before the lake, this trail forks. Go left as the right-hand trail continues to Purcell Marsh. (This last junction isn't shown on the Kootenai National Forest map.)

Bring drinking water; it can be very dry until you reach the lower lake.

You can get a feeling of remoteness on this hike, but not until after the first quarter-mile, which goes through a clearcut. The rest of the trail has been designated a National Recreation Trail, and motorized vehicles are not permitted. The threat of bear trouble is slight, and mosquitoes aren't a significant problem. This area is within a grizzly bear recovery unit; use normal bear country precautions.

If you're an experienced hiker, you may want to make an interesting side trip. From Lower Boulder Lake, backtrack about a fourth of a mile and take Trail #62 west to the ridge top at the head of Basin Creek, which is about a five-hundred-foot climb. Then drop nine hundred feet to Purcell Marsh. Here you'll find few signs of man, and you'll have an excellent chance to see moose. It's an extra five-mile round-trip to Purcell Marsh from Boulder Lakes.

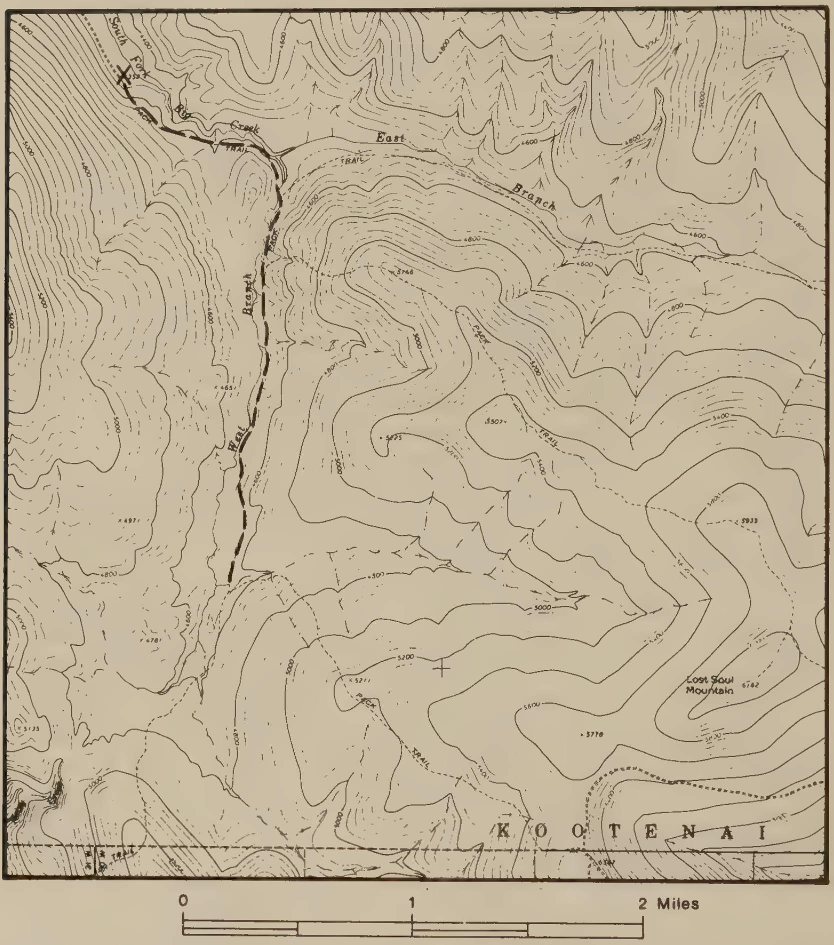
Boulder Lakes country hosts the same diversity of wildlife found throughout northwestern Montana—deer, black bear, moose, elk, etc. Around the lakes, you'll find beargrass, glacier lilies, and a variety of other wildflowers. On the Purcell Marsh side trip, you can find the uncommon alpine bog kalmia. Lower Boulder Lake has fair fishing for pan-sized cutthroat.

Although this is usually a day hike, there's an established Forest Service campsite at the lower lake. A few backpackers stay at Purcell Marsh, but the campsite there is primitive. Both sites have sufficient firewood and water. *—Linda and Tom Hurlock*

HIKE 4 *WEST BRANCH OF THE SOUTH FORK OF BIG CREEK*

General description: An easy day hike perfectly suited for families because of the slight elevation gain.
General location: 15 miles north of Libby in the Purcell Mountains.
Maps: Banfield Mountain USGS Quad and Kootenai National Forest Map, Rexford Ranger District.
Special attraction: Easy hike that very few people take.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 250 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rexford Ranger Station,

HIKE 4 *WEST BRANCH OF THE SOUTH FORK OF BIG CREEK*


South Fork
Big Creek
East Branch
West Branch
PACK TRAIL
Lost Soul Mountain
KOOTENAI
0
1
2 Miles

Kootenai National Forest, 1299 Highway 93 North, Eureka, MT 59917, or call (406) 296-2536.

The hike: Most Montana hikes include at least one steep hill to climb, and the West Branch of Big Creek is no exception. The hill, however, is a short one—only half a block long and climbing only about seventy-five feet. Morever, it's at the very beginning of the hike, while you're still fresh. After that, the trail winds along a slow-moving mountain stream that's frequently interrupted by beaver dams.

To find the trailhead, go about eight miles south of the bridge across Lake Koocanusa (near Rexford) and take the Big Creek Road from the west side of the reservoir. Follow this logging road west for about seven miles, swinging south along the South Fork of Big Creek for another eight miles to a three-way junction half a mile south of tiny Horse Lakes. Take the left-hand road past the marsh and continue for another four miles to the end of the road.

The trailhead can be reached more directly from Libby by following the Pipe Creek Road for about fifteen to twenty miles to a "T" junction. Turn right, go another mile and turn onto the South Fork Big Creek Road at the three-way junction by Horse Lakes. Continue to the right past the marsh, and go four miles to the end of the road, where the trail begins.

The trail is well maintained as it winds along the stream. Late summer and fall are the best times for this hike. Earlier in the season, the trail can be quite wet and boggy. And mosquitoes can make an early summer hike unpleasant.

Since the hike is only six miles round-trip, it's nicely suited for families. Still, it's very little used. Even with frequent stops to watch the beavers, you can make this trip in four hours.

Motorized vehicles aren't allowed on this trail from April 1 through November 30. The area seems remote, with signs of man disappearing once you're a hundred yards from the road. Fishing is fair for small cutthroat.

Few hikers make this an overnight backpack. But if you're so inclined, camp at the juncture of the East Branch and West Branch of Big Creek. The spot has lovely, grassy campsites and a few good fishing pools.

This area is in a state of flux, with changes in the way grizzlies are being managed, plans to close roads, and logging activity. Check with the district ranger for a current status report.—*Linda and Tom Hurlock*

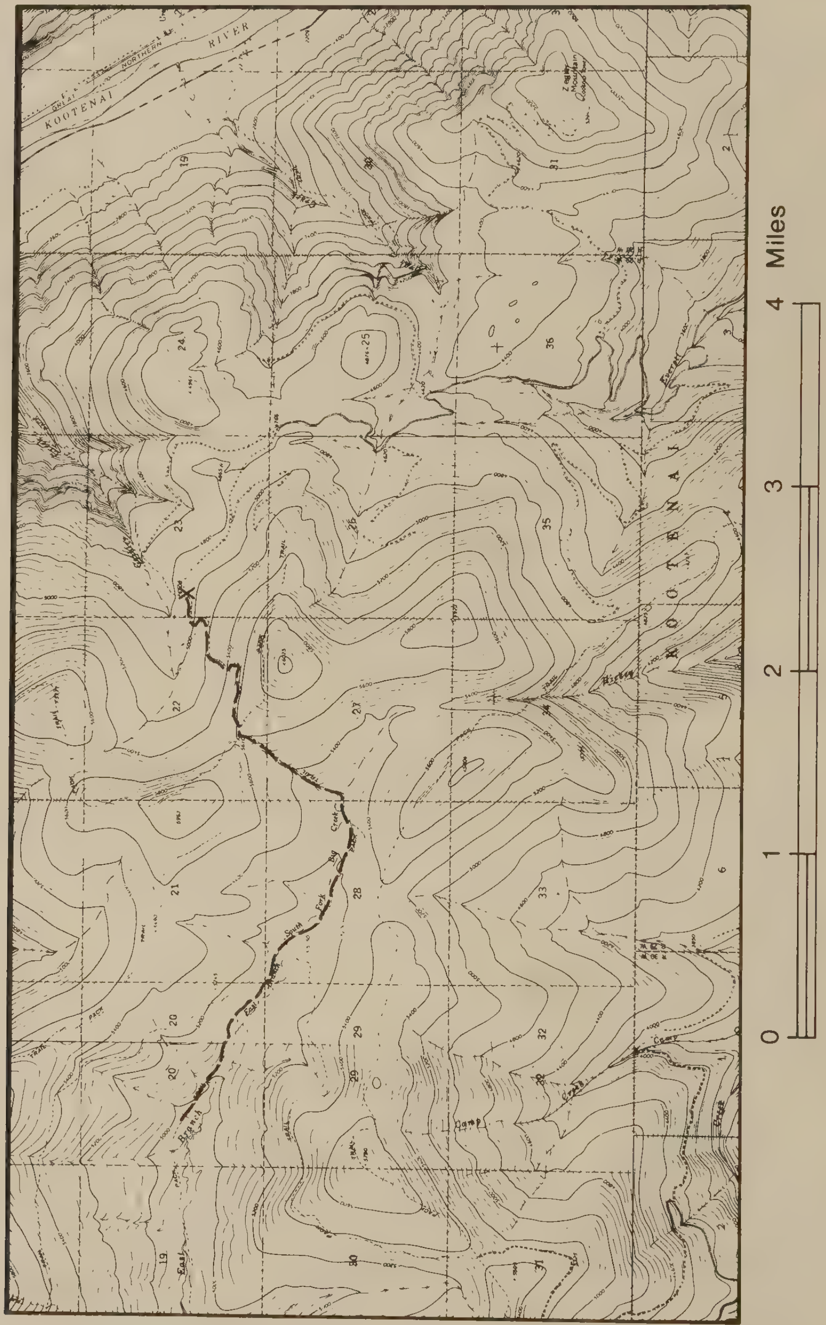
HIKE 5 *EAST BRANCH OF THE SOUTH FORK OF BIG CREEK*

General description: An interesting day hike into a seldom-used and ecologically unusual area.
General location: 15 miles northeast of Libby in the Purcell Mountains.
Maps: Ural and Banfield Mountain USGS Quads, and Kootenai National Forest maps, Rexford Ranger District.
Special Attraction: A very moist site—unusual for Montana.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 700 feet.
Elevation loss: 610 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rexford Ranger Station, Kootenai National Forest, 1299 Highway 93 North, Eureka, MT 59917, or call (406) 296-2536.

The hike: This hike is similar to the one into the West Branch of Big Creek except for one addition common to most Montana hikers—a big hill. This hike is still easy, but it has one seven-hundred-foot ridge to climb.

Find the trailhead by driving east from Libby to Libby Dam, then north for about twelve miles along the west shore of Lake Koocanusa until you turn left (west) on the Bristow Creek Road #4851. Follow the Bristow Creek Road for about two miles until you see Forest Road #4874. Take this road north along the west side of Everett Creek. Go about six miles, crossing Ural

HIKE 5 *EAST BRANCH OF THE SOUTH FORK OF BIG CREEK*



KOOTENAI
RIVER
GREAT NORTHERN
KOOTENAI
South Fork
Big Creek
East Branch
TRAIL
Camp
0
1
2
3
4
Miles

The South Fork of Big Creek in the Kootenai National Forest. Tom Hurlock photo.

Creek, to Trail #70 heading up Geibler Creek in the west side of Section 23. (The last mile of Forest Road #4874 is closed during the winter and spring.) The trail is marked with red "blazes."

The trail starts at about 4,900 feet and goes over a 5,600-foot ridge before dropping down to 5,300 feet, where it starts leveling off. Then it turns west to follow the north side of the East Branch. Big Meadow, perhaps the scenic highlight of this hike, lies at 5,000 feet, about two miles past the ridge top. From here on, the trail crosses a number of small streams and meadows.

There is a clearcut about a quarter of a mile from the trailhead. But you can see where the trail takes off from the right edge of the clearcut, about halfway up, by following the painted red arrows.

From that point, the only sounds are nature's own. Like the one along the West Branch of Big Creek, very few hikers use this trail—even though it's just right for families and beginners.

This is an eight-mile round-trip that usually takes about five hours. Water is available along the trail, so there's no need to carry any.

The trail is adequately maintained, but it can be very boggy in the early summer—bad enough to make waterproof boots necessary. Mosquitoes are also abundant during early summer, so most hikers wait until late summer or fall for this hike. Motorized vehicles are banned from April 1 through November 30.

Although black bears are common in this area, bear/hiker conflicts are almost unheard of. The area also has a large moose population, as well as beaver, muskrat, barred owl, deer, mink, pine marten, spruce grouse, ruffed grouse, and many smaller birds. It's excellent for observing wet-site wildflowers such as trillium and false hellebore. Also expect to see beargrass and Canada dogwood.

Most hikers take only one day to make this trip, but it can be an overnight backpack. The best campsite is in the northwestern corner of Section 28, where an unmaintained trail crosses the East Branch trail. Firewood and water are plentiful, and the campsite is dry. However, fishing is marginal, as is the case throughout this hike.

To make an interesting side trip, leave the main trail at the junction on the ridge top. Follow the side trail less than a mile to the northeastern corner of Section 27 and go through the openings shown on the Ural USGS Quad sheet to a 6,025-foot knob. From this high point, you can get a scenic perspective of the entire area, including the Cabinet Mountains on the eastern horizon.

Perhaps the top attraction of this hike, however, is the gentle valley with its meandering stream and wet meadows, the last such site remaining unroaded in the Kootenai area of northwestern Montana. On top of that, it's easily accessible to hikers.—*Linda and Tom Hurlock*

HIKE 6 *FISH LAKES CANYON*

General description: One of the easiest and most scenic 12-mile hikes in Montana.
General location: 30 air miles north of Libby on the east side of the Yaak River.
Maps: Lost Horse Mountain, Mount Henry, and Yaak USGS Quads; and Kootenai National Forest Map, Yaak Ranger District.
Special attractions: A 50-foot waterfall and a chain of five lakes in a rugged, low-elevation canyon.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 640 feet.
Season: June through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1437 N. Highway 2, Troy, MT 59935, or call (406) 295-4693.

The hike: To some, Fish Lakes is an overnight camp-out. To others, it's a full day's hike. But for every hiker, it's one of the most scenic and diverse trips they'll ever take.

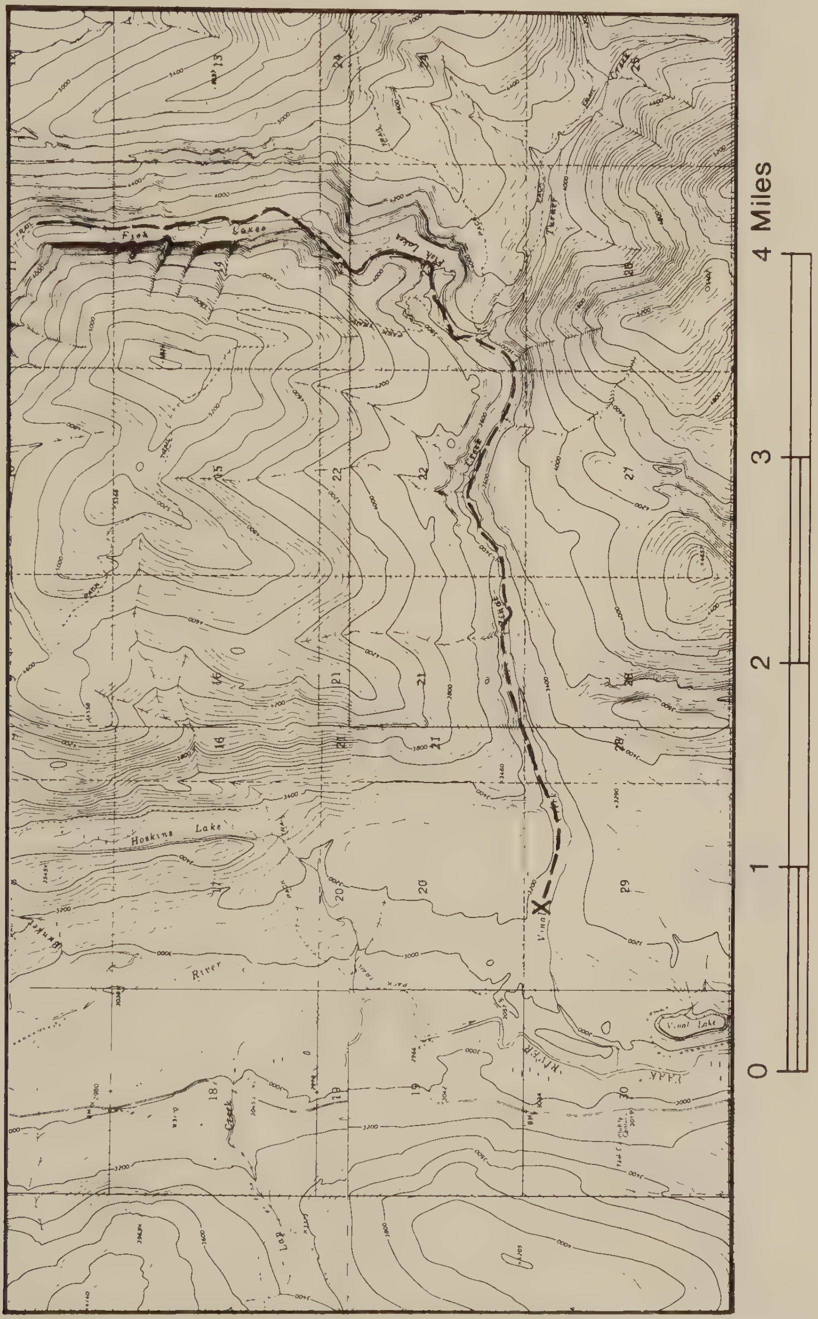
To find the trailhead, take the Pipe Creek Road north from Libby. Follow it for about thirty-one miles until you turn right onto Vinal Lake Road #746. Vinal Creek Trail #9 takes off to the east about six miles up this road. (This trail isn't shown on the Lost Horse Mountain USGS Quad.)

The trail is well-maintained and gets rocky only along a few talus slopes. There's plenty of drinking water along the way. Elevation gain is a mere six hundred feet to the northernmost lake.

It takes an average hiker twelve hours to make the complete round-trip. However, if you only want to see South Fish Lake, the first in the series of five, the trip should take eight hours. This makes the Fish Lakes Canyon suitable for almost any hiker—families with children to veteran backpackers.

The area is quite remote—except at the north end of the canyon where a few signs of man (i.e. clearcuts in the distance) are barely visible.

HIKE 6 *FISH LAKES CANYON*


Fish Lakes
Fish Lakes
Hoskins Lake
River
Vinal Lake
0
1
2
3
4 Miles

The southernmost lake in a chain of lakes in the Fish Lakes Canyon. Tom Hurlock photo.

Wildlife and wildflowers abound and are characteristic of northwestern Montana—moose, deer, black bear, wake-robin, Canada dogwood, and clematis, to name a few. Wild roses line Vinal Creek in great abundance.

Bear danger is low, but mosquitoes can be vicious in June and July. Take this hike anytime during the summer or fall.

For overnighters, there is an undeveloped campsite at Turner Falls, about 3.5 miles into the hike at the mouth of the canyon. It's so close to the falls that the roar of the cascading water dominates everything. The site has firewood and dry spots to pitch tents.

There is a similar campsite at the foot of South Fish Lake, the second and largest of the chain. This has a great view and good fishing.

South Fish Lake has perhaps the best fishing in the canyon—with nice-sized cutthroat, rainbow, and eastern brook trout. Fish Middle Fish Lake for pan-sized cutthroat and North Fish Lake for smaller cutthroat.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the hike is Turner Falls. But even without the falls, this would be one of the most beautiful hikes in Montana. Here are five mountain lakes strung through a narrow, rugged canyon lined with a quiet forest of large cedar and larch trees.

The Fish Lakes/Vinal Creek Trail has been designated a National Recreation Trail and has been given semi-primitive, non-motorized recreation status on the Kootenai National Forest Plan.—*Linda and Tom Hurlock*

HIKE 7 *PARSNIP CREEK*

General description: A very short, easy hike.
General location: 20 miles northeast of Libby in the Purcell Mountains.
Maps: Inch Mountain USGS Quad and Kootenai National Forest Map, Rexford Ranger District.
Special attractions: Fine example of old-growth cedar woods just off the beaten path.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 50 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rexford Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1299 Highway 93 North, Eureka, MT 59917, or call (406) 296-2536.

The hike: This hike might more appropriately be described as a short, relaxing stroll in the woods.

To find the trailhead, drive east from Libby on Montana Highway 37, and turn north and go about twenty miles up the west side of Lake Koocanusa. Watch carefully for the turn up Parsnip Creek. This road, which turns southwest, is shown on the 1985 Kootenai National Forest Map. It leaves the highway about a quarter of a mile north of Trail #67. Follow the Parsnip Creek Road

Black bears, common in most Montana mountain ranges. Harry Engels photo.

until it ends. The trail takes off on the lower side of the road right where the road ends.

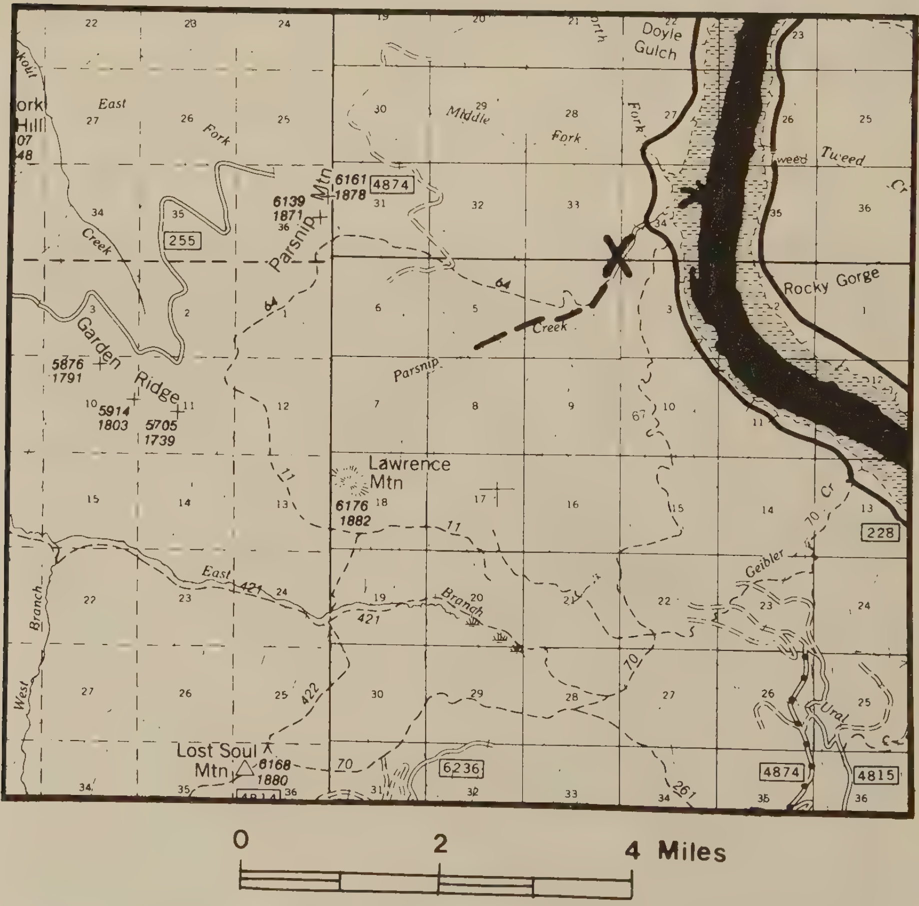
Although back from the stream slightly, the trail follows Parsnip Creek for about half a mile, and then it climbs steeply uphill. Hikers usually stroll up the trail to the point where it turns uphill, enjoying wildlife and wildflowers, and then return. Even at a slow pace, the round-trip takes only an hour.

There is virtually no elevation gain, bear trouble is slight, mosquitoes aren't a problem, and water is available all along the trail.

Very few hikers camp on this trail, but a few have stayed at a fair campsite at the end of the road.

Parsnip Creek is part of the Big Creek/Gold Hill Roadless Area, which the Forest Service may log in the future.—*Linda and Tom Hurlock*

HIKE 7 *PARSNIP CREEK*



Doyle Gulch
East Fork
Middle Fork
Fork
Tweed
Tweed Cr
Parsnip Mtn
6161 1878
6139 1871
4874
255
Creek
Garden Ridge
5876 1791
5914 1803
5705 1739
Parsnip Creek
Rocky Gorge
Lawrence Mtn
6176 1882
67
64
71
Cr
70
228
Geibler
East Branch
421
422
West Branch
Lost Soul Mtn
6168 1880
6236
Ural
4874
4815
261
0
2
4 Miles

HIKE 8 *RODERICK MOUNTAIN*

General description: A strenuous day hike.
General location: 20 miles north of Troy.
Maps: Sylvanite USGS Quad and Kootenai National Forest Map.
Special attraction: Eye-opening scenery from the top of one of northwestern Montana's tallest peaks.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,924 feet.
Season: July through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1437 N. Highway 2, Troy, MT 59935, or call (406) 295-4693.

A word of caution: This area has a high number of resident grizzlies, and the Forest Service is actively trying to encourage its use as grizzly bear habitat in hopes of helping the recovery of the big bear's population in this part of the state. For this reason, the Forest Service discourages any increase in hiking activity. Obviously, if you do choose to hike here, you should take all the precautions outlined in "Hiking In Bear Country," at the beginning of this book.

The hike: To find the trailhead, drive west of Troy on U.S. Highway 2 for about twelve miles and then turn right onto the paved Yaak River Road. After ten miles, watch for the unoccupied Sylvanite Ranger Station in a clearing on your right. Go less than a mile past the ranger station and turn right onto Burnt Creek Road #472. The trailhead for Roderick Mountain Trail #193 is on your right, less than half a mile up Burnt Creek Road.

The trail is somewhat rocky and faint in spots, but it's still easy to follow. Although the trail cuts through deep timber most of the way, there are plenty of open parks with expansive vistas.

It's a gradual uphill pull all the way, going from 2,720 to 6,644 feet in seven miles. The first two miles are the toughest.

Although there are a few springs and intermittent streams, this is essentially a dry, fourteen-mile round-trip. Bring plenty of drinking water.

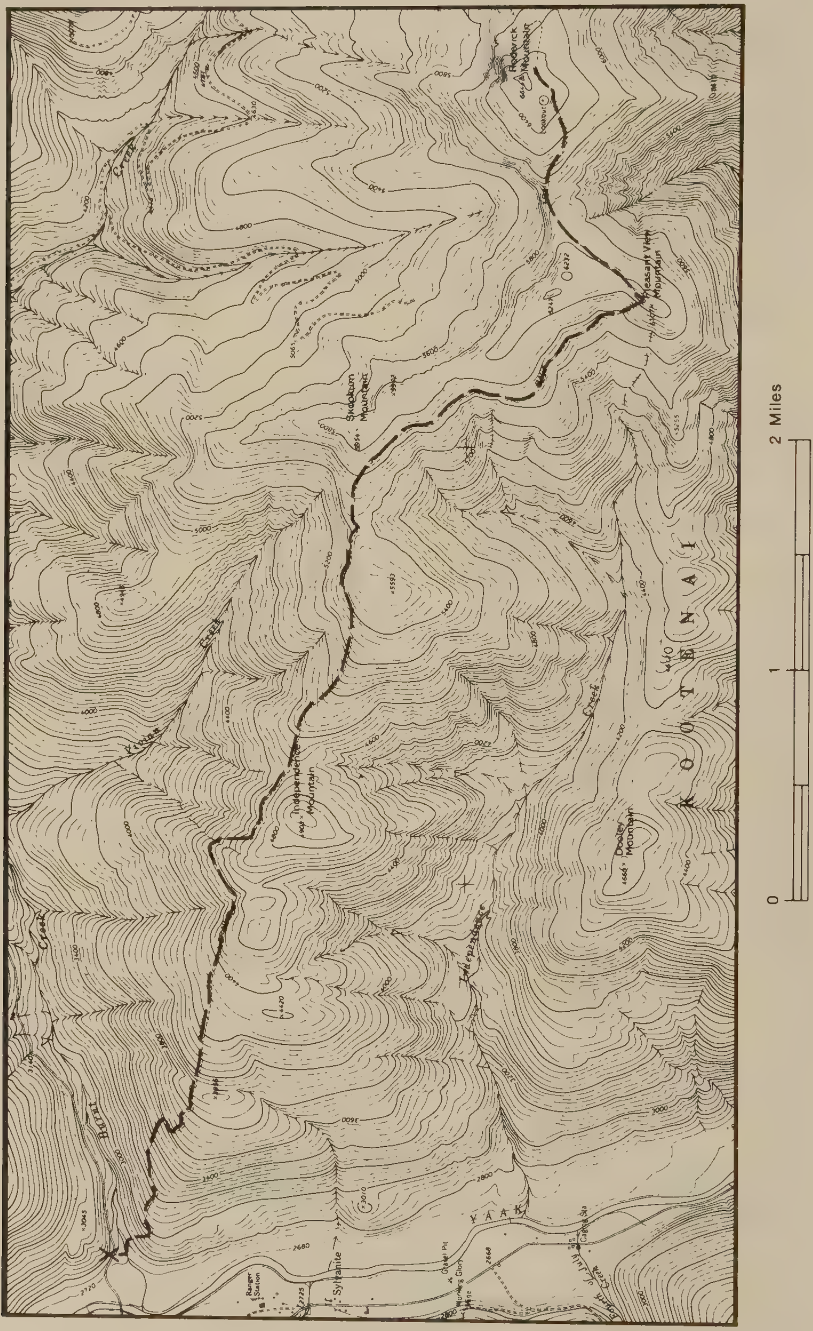
Snow usually leaves the area by mid-July. So anytime in late summer or fall is right for climbing Roderick Mountain.

Actually, you climb three mountains on this hike. At about the four-mile mark, you traverse the western slope of 5,954-foot Skookum Mountain; a mile later, the trail goes almost to the summit of 6,107-foot Pleasant View Mountain. Although impressive, these two peaks are belittled by Roderick Mountain.

Although few hikers make this an overnighter, you can camp at the base of Roderick Mountain. There are a few springs here, but you are still smart to bring your own water instead of depending upon them.

From the top of Roderick, you can look east into the very remote country of Sheepherder, Flattail, and Papoose drainages, which are trailless.—*Mike Comola*

HIKE 8 *RODERICK MOUNTAIN*


Roderick Mountain
Lookout
Pleasant View Mountain
Skookum Mountain
Independence Mountain
Dooley Mountain
KOOTENAI
Vinal Creek
Independence Creek
Burnt Creek
Creek
YAAK
Ranger Station
Sylvanite
Gravel Pit
Morning Glory
Garnet Sta
0
1
2 Miles

The Cabinet Mountains Region

Overview

The Cabinet Mountains south of Libby in the Kootenai National Forest offer beautiful high country above lush forests. The moss-covered giant hemlock and larch provide rich habitat for deer, elk, black bear, and an occasional grizzly. You will find a variety of birds here—including grouse, golden eagles, western tanagers, and warblers. Blessed with lots of moisture from the Pacific, mosaics of trees and wildflowers flourish here like no other place in Montana.

The Cabinets support some of Montana's largest huckleberries. During a good year, pickers can head out to an old burn or clear-cut and gather the succulent berries by the bucket full. Experienced pickers can fill a gallon bucket in less than an hour. Huckleberries growing in the lower elevations of the Cabinet Mountains are usually ready for eating in late July and August. Many species of wildlife rely on the berries for food.

The craggy peaks skirted with subalpine fir and retreating snowbanks offer an eyeful of scenery. Most of the range is included in the 94,000-acre Cabinet Mountains Wilderness. Low and mid-elevation sections of forest surrounding the wilderness are currently being proposed for similar designation. The Cabinet Mountains complete the lower portion of the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem critical to grizzly recovery.

HIKE 9 *PILLICK RIDGE, ROSS CREEK*

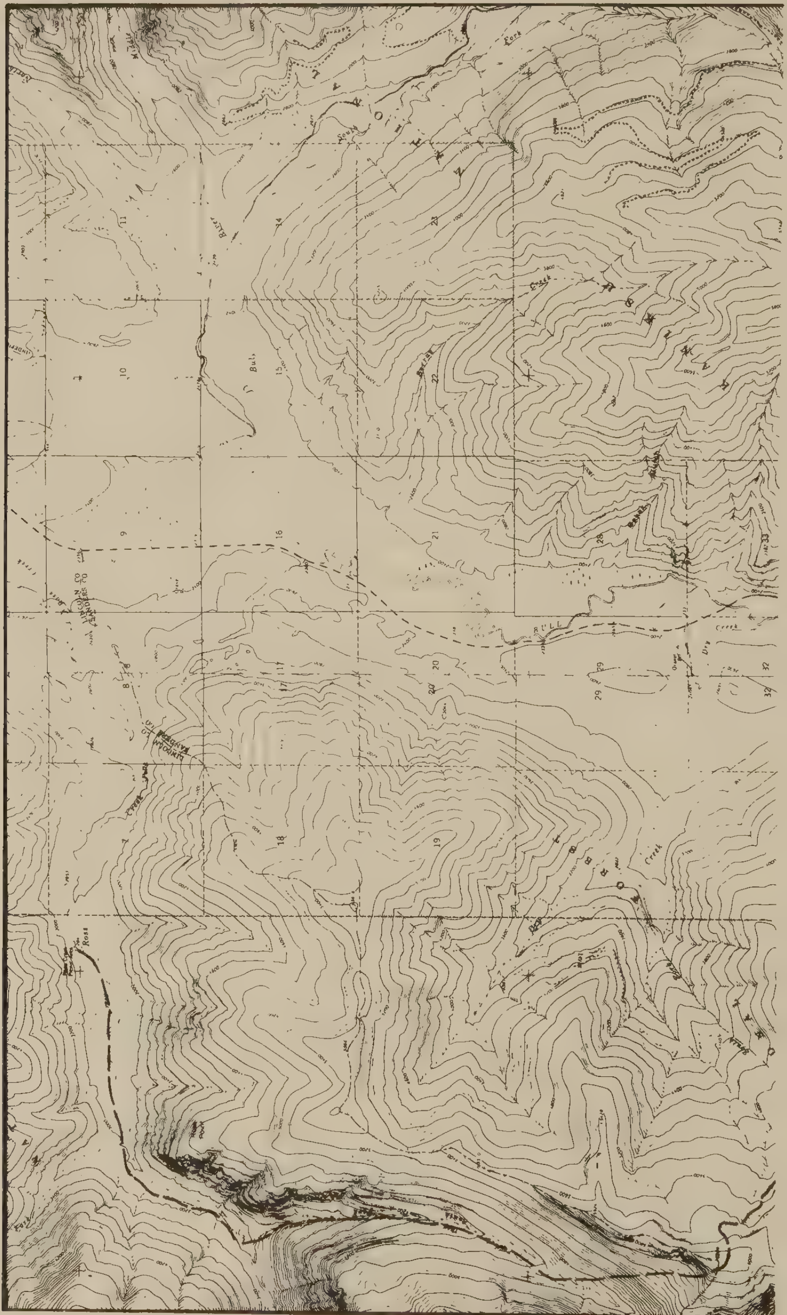
General description: A day or overnight hike for experienced hikers. Or, if two cars are used, a rugged two- or three-day point-to-point hike.
General location: 35 miles southwest of Libby in the West Cabinet Mountains (Scotchman Peaks).
Maps: Smeads Bench, Heron, and Sawtooth USGS Quads; and Kootenai National Forest Map, Cabinet Ranger District.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,000 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Cabinet Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 2693 Highway 200, Trout Creek, MT 59874, or call (406) 827-3533.

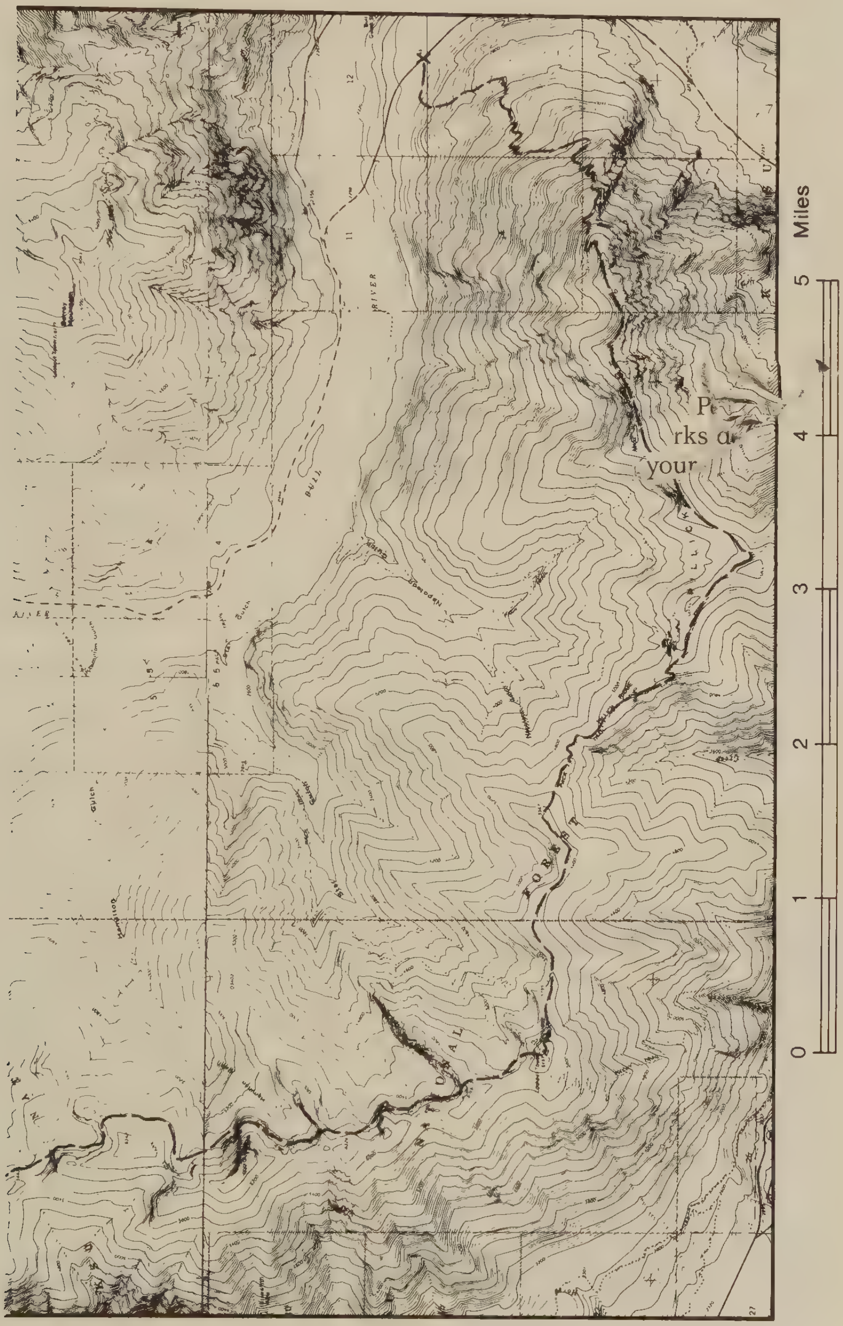
The hike: Hikers who don't mind rugged country with little water and who appreciate wild scenery and solitude should like this trip. Pillick Ridge is the pristine, southeastern spur of the Scotchman Peaks and forms the scenic western backdrop to the Bull River Valley.

A Forest Service trail follows the crest of Pillick Ridge for ten miles to a lookout on Squaw Peak. Views of the Cabinet Mountains, the Bull and Clark Fork valleys, and Lake Pend O'reille in Idaho are superb.

You stand a good chance of seeing deer, elk, bears, bighorn sheep, and

HIKE 9 *PILLICK RIDGE, ROSS CREEK*


South
Fork
Bull
Creek
BULL
Dry
Creek
Ross
LINCOLN CO
SANDERS CO
10
11
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
28
29
32


0
1
2
3
4
5
Miles
RIVER
BULL
RIVER
Gulch
Gulch
FOREST
P
rks a
your

mountain goats. In addition, the southern slopes of the ridge have an abundance of dry-site wildflowers.

To get to the Pillick Ridge trailhead, take State Highway 200 about forty miles west from Thompson Falls, through Trout Creek, to the junction with Montana Highway 56. Follow MT 56 (marked Highway 202 on older maps) for nine miles to the signed trailhead on the west (left) side of the road.

The six-hour, twelve-mile walk to Squaw Peak gains 3,000 feet on Trail #1036. Take plenty of water, especially if you're camping. There are subalpine basins below the northeast side of the ridge that have water and possible campsites.

Bull elk still in velvet. Harry Engels photo.

However, once off the ridge, the terrain becomes very steep and brushy. So don't expect easy going or an abundance of level camping spots.

You can return to your car from Squaw Peak via the same route, or you can walk to a second car by way of the Napoleon (#1035) or Star Gulch (#1016) trails, both of which drop down into the Bull River Valley. Napoleon Creek Trail takes off to the right two miles before Squaw Peak, as Star Creek does three-fourths of a mile before the mountain. The trailheads join up with MT 56 thirteen and fourteen miles north of Montana Highway 200 respectively.

By far the best one-way trip entails leaving a second car at the Ross Creek Cedars Scenic Area, fifteen miles north on Highway 56 from the Pillick Ridge trailhead and four miles west on the well-marked Forest Service Road.

If you leave a car at Ross Creek, you can strike off to the north from Squaw Peak for six trailless, ridge-top miles to Sawtooth Mountain. Although the going is very rugged, the view is excellent and solitude assured. Be on the alert for elk and mountain goats or even one of the few grizzlies still in this area. Scramble up Sawtooth Mountain for a panorama of the heavily glaciated upper Ross Creek drainage.

Passing around Sawtooth Mountain from the right, you'll come to the South Fork of Ross Creek. Another option is to wind around Sawtooth Peak and drop into the Middle Fork of Ross Creek. Follow either of these forks downstream for approximately six miles to the Ross Creek Cedars and your car. Only the last four miles will be on a trail; dropping down to the valley floor requires some difficult bushwhacking.

The very wild Ross Creek drainage contains some of the most beautiful forests in the state. However, this hike is strictly for woods-wise hikers with topo maps and compass.

A large portion of this trail is within the Forest Service's proposed 75,339-acre Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 10 *CEDAR LAKES LOOP*

General description: A long day or overnight loop for experienced hikers.
General location: 10 miles southwest of Libby.
Maps: Scenery Mountain USGS Quad and the Kootenai National Forest's Cabinet Mountain Wilderness Map.
Special attractions: On clear days, spectacular views of the Cabinets, Glacier National Park, Canadian Rockies, Selkirk Mountains in Idaho, the Purcell Mountains, Scotchman Peaks, and Kootenai Falls 4,000 feet below.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 4,300 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Libby Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1263 Highway 37, Libby, MT 59923, or call (406) 293-8861.

The hike: For anyone interested in a fairly demanding hike that can provide many scenic rewards, this trip is ideal.

From Libby take U.S. Highway 2 west for four miles to the Cedar Creek

Cedar Lakes in the Kootenai National Forest. Forest Service photo.

Road #402. Turn left (south) onto this road and follow it about three miles until you reach the trailhead.

The sixteen-mile hike includes a 4,300-foot gain in elevation, and most of the walking is on waterless ridge tops. The hike begins with an easy one-mile walk up Cedar Creek Trail #141 (closed to motorized vehicles) to its junction with Scenery Mountain Trail #649. Take this well-maintained trail north and then west for approximately five dry, uphill miles to Scenery Mountain. The view gets more spectacular as you go, and an open forest of large ponderosa pine further improves the scenery. Most of the trail is on a ridge top with cool breezes and few insect pests.

The view from Scenery Mountain is superb, particularly if you look down upon the jade-colored Kootenai River. Kootenai Falls—the largest remaining falls in Montana—and the China Rapids Area upstream can be seen 4,000 feet below.

From Scenery Mountain, continue southwest on a maintained trail that generally follows the ridge top for three miles to Grambauer Mountain. Here, the view expands to include Lake Creek and Lower Kootenai valleys and the Scotchman Peaks. From Grambauer Peak, head south along the main Cabinet Divide. After a mile of ridge walking, veer slightly to the left, leaving the ridge top. Bushwhack until intercepting either Lower Cedar Lake or the trail leading to it. Along the way, stop to fill up in some of Montana's largest huckleberry patches.

Both Cedar Lakes have campsites. Use existing campsites rather than create new ones.

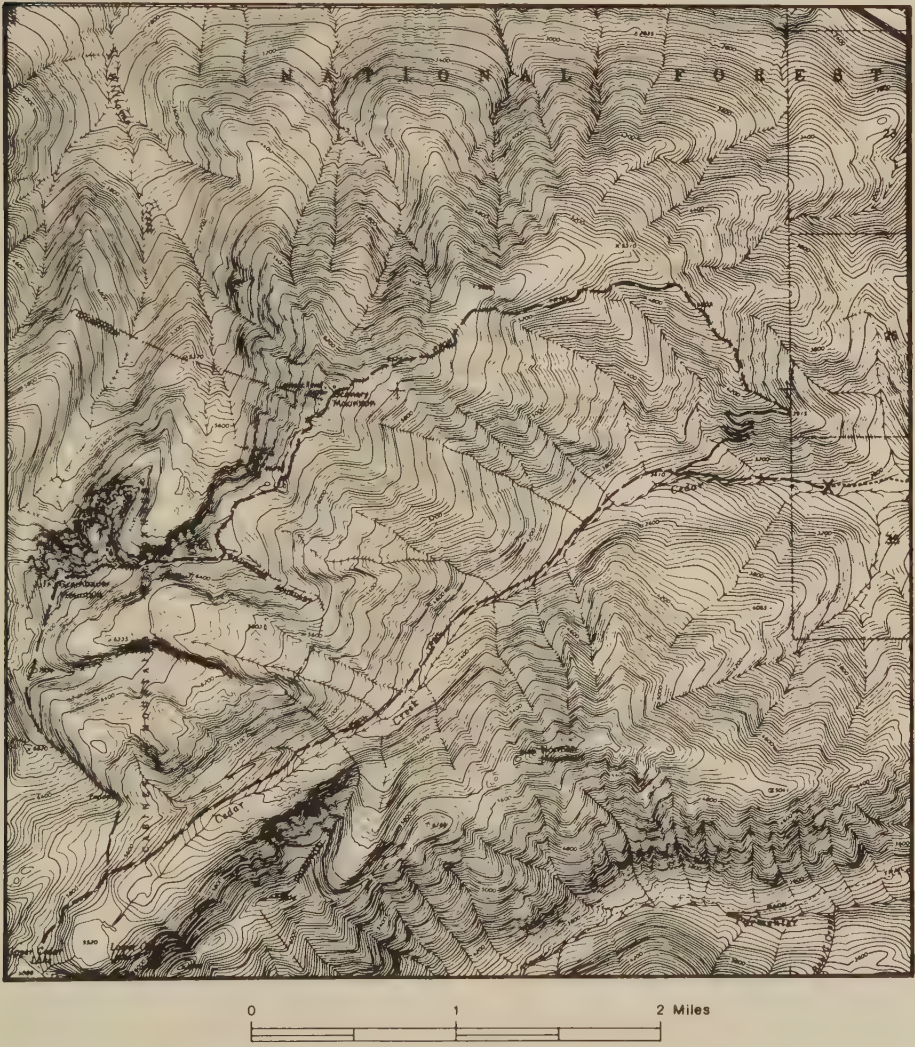
The loop is closed by following the Cedar Creek Trail through a beautiful forest back to the trailhead. Less experienced hikers can make this a twelve-mile round-trip by retracing their steps back to the trailhead from Scenery Mountain.

Grizzlies are present in the Cabinets, but they're sighted less frequently at this northern end of the range. Black bears and many more wild animals are common, however.

Clear weather adds to the enjoyment of this hike. Late August through September is the best time to make it. The bugs are mostly gone, and the shorter, often rainy days of late fall haven't yet begun.

The entire trail to Scenery Mountain lies outside the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, but the Forest Service has recommended it as a possible addition to the wilderness.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 10 *CEDAR LAKES LOOP*



HIKE 11 *BAREE AND BEAR LAKES*

General description: A long day hike or leisurely three-day backpack.
General location: 30 miles south of Libby in the Cabinet Mountains.
Maps: Goat Peak and Silver Butte Pass USGS Quads, and the Kootenai National Forest's Cabinet Mountain Wilderness Map.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,700 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Libby Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1263 Highway 37, Libby, MT 59923, or call (406) 293-8861.

The hike: If you don't like to retrace your steps and you dislike the difficult, two-car logistics that most one-way hikes involve, you should like this hike. The trailheads to the two lakes are less than a mile apart, and the lakes are connected by a trail along the top of the Cabinet Divide.

A quick study of the Cabinet Wilderness Map shows that there are a number of short hikes into the Cabinets. This one has the advantage of being among the least traveled. Also, the trails used on this hike are generally open a couple of weeks earlier (late June) than most trails into the Cabinets.

From Kalispell, take U.S. Highway 2 west for sixty-five miles to the Silver Butte Road #148. Turn left (south) and proceed up the road for six miles until it forks. Take the right fork, the Silver Butte/Fisher River Road. The Baree Lake trailhead is at approximately mile post # 10. Trail #489 reaches Baree Lake in three miles and gains 1,700 feet.

After Baree Lake, the trail makes an easy climb to the Cabinet Divide, then follows Trail #360 along the divide to the north. The view from the ridge is excellent, particularly to the west and the northwest into Swamp Creek, Wanless and Buck lakes, and the peaks surrounding them. Although grizzlies are uncommon along the Cabinet Divide, you may want to make noise along the trail as an extra precaution.

After a mile of ridge-line hiking, Trail #63 to Bear Lakes splits to the right (east). This trail runs just below the top of a spur ridge off the Cabinet Divide. However, a five-minute detour to the top of the ridge affords a nice view of the upper Trail Creek Basin. Stay on the ridge top until it intersects the trail a mile to the east, crosses the ridge, and drops down into the Bear Lakes.

Only one of the Bear Lakes (the largest and northernmost) has fish. It has one good campsite.

Trail #531 back to the Silver Butte Road cuts east across the outlet of the southernmost Bear Lake, and then generally southeast through forested country. After reaching the power-line corridor that runs parallel to the Silver Butte Road, follow it southwest for three-fourths of a mile to the Baree Lake trailhead and your vehicle.

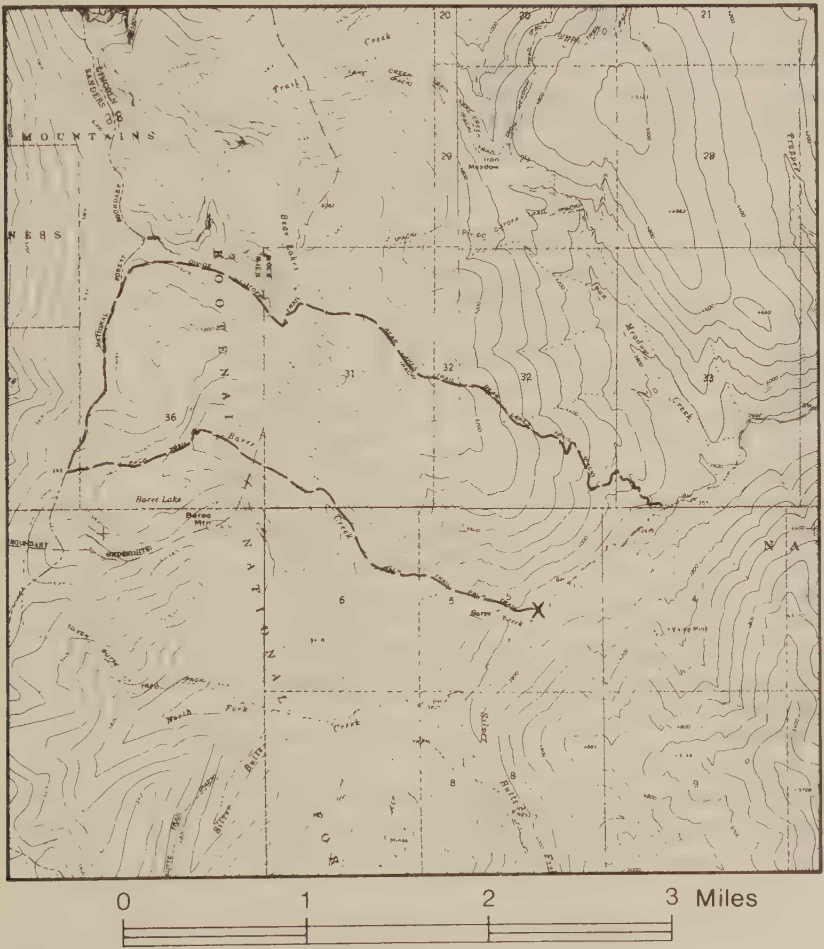
Much of the trail after Bear Lake, part of the Baree Lake Trail, and two of the three Bear Lakes lie on Burlington Northern land. The Kootenai National Forest land-use plan for the upper Fisher River Country recognized that this and other adjacent private land is important to the integrity of the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness and should be bought or traded for public land in other areas.

(Private sections have been acquired in the checkerboard land swap.)

The Trail Creek and Iron Meadows areas to the north and east of Bear Lakes offer interesting variations on the Baree/Bear Lakes hike. One variation requires leaving a car at the Silver Dollar Trailhead, nine miles up the West Fisher River Road (four miles north on U.S. Highway 2). Rather than returning to the Silver Butte Road from Bear Lake, take the Iron Meadow Trail #114. You'll walk through some of the Kootenai Forest's best elk country. From Iron Meadows, take Silver Dollar Trail #114 to your car.

Like the Bear Lakes area, much of the Trail Creek area is owned by Burlington Northern. BN has logged in this area. Also, the Kootenai National Forest has logged parts of the Trail Creek drainage. Contact the Kootenai National Forest for an update on logging activities, and express your opinion on how they could affect backcountry recreation in the area.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 11 *BAREE AND BEAR LAKES*



MOUNTAINS
Creek
Trail
Iron Meadow
Bear Lakes
KOOTENAI
NATIONAL
Baree Lake
Baree Mtn
Baree Creek
Meadow
Creek
Trapper
North Fork
Silver Butte
20
21
29
28
31
32
33
36
5
6
7
8
9
0
1
2
3 Miles

HIKE 12 *LEIGH LAKE*

General description: A fairly rigorous, three-mile round-trip for beginners.
General location: 12 miles south of Libby.
Maps: Snowshoe Peak USGS Quads and Kootenai National Forest's Cabinet Wilderness Map.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,000 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Libby Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1263 Highway 37, Libby, MT 59923, or call (406) 293-8861.

The hike: The Cabinet Wilderness is small but diverse. It contains high peaks, glaciers, rain forests, and numerous lakes. Leigh Lake is the largest lake, nearly a mile across.

Take the Bear Creek Road #278 turnoff on U.S. Highway 2 about seven miles south of Libby. After three miles, turn right and go five miles on the Big Cherry Creek Road #867. Turn right again onto Leigh Creek Road and proceed for two miles to the trailhead at the end of the road. Trail #132 climbs about 1,000 feet in 1.5 miles and ends at the 5,144-foot-elevation lake.

At the west end of the lake is a massive, 3,000-foot wall, the high point being 8,712-foot Snowshoe Peak, the highest peak in the Cabinet Range and the highest peak between Glacier National Park and the Cascades.

You can climb this peak from the lake, but it takes most of a day. From the outlet of the lake, head northwest straight up the face of a large east ridge. Once on the ridge top, follow it southwest to the main ridge, being careful to notice Blackwell Glacier to your right and also being careful not to fall in that direction. After intersecting the main ridge, work your way up along the west side of this ridge until it levels out at the peak. Don't venture out onto the snowfields on the east side of the main ridge unless you're properly trained and equipped for ice climbing.

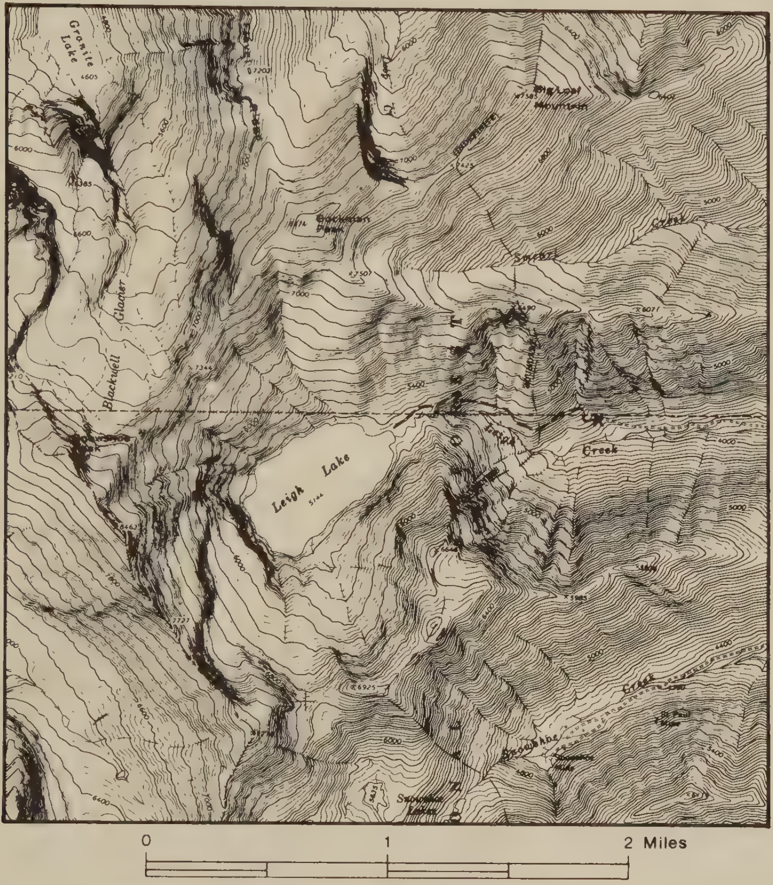
Leigh Lake offers marginal fishing. If you're a hardy soul, you can pack in a small rubber raft to improve your chances.

This area gets phenomenal amounts of snow—as much as twenty to thirty feet. In July, the lake is still full of ice floes. The waves lap them into strange shapes, and paddling around them, looking down and seeing the odd shapes down in the deep blue water, gives one an eerie feeling. Some ice floes are quite large, and one can climb onto them (wearing a life vest, of course) and fish from them.

Camping is prohibited within three hundred feet of the lake. Also, stock is *not* allowed on Trail #132.

The lake is well within the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness but easy to reach. This makes it popular locally, so hit this one on a weekday.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 12 *LEIGH LAKE*


Granite Lake
6605
6385
Blackwell Glacier
Bockman Peak
Big Loaf Mountain
7000
Leigh Lake
5166
Leigh Creek
Creek
6925
6000
6600
5000
Snowshoe Lake
0
1
2 Miles

Waterfall on the way to Leigh Lake in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness. Forest Service photo.

HIKE 13 MURR CANYON

General description: A moderate day trip.
General location: 45 miles southwest of Kalispell.
Maps: Shroder Creek USGS Quad and the Lolo National Forest Map (Idaho and Montana).
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,700 feet.
Season: June to October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, P.O. Box 429, 408 Clayton, Plains, MT 59859, or call (406) 826-3821.

The hike: The canyon isn't well-known by hikers, although it has many scenic attractions.

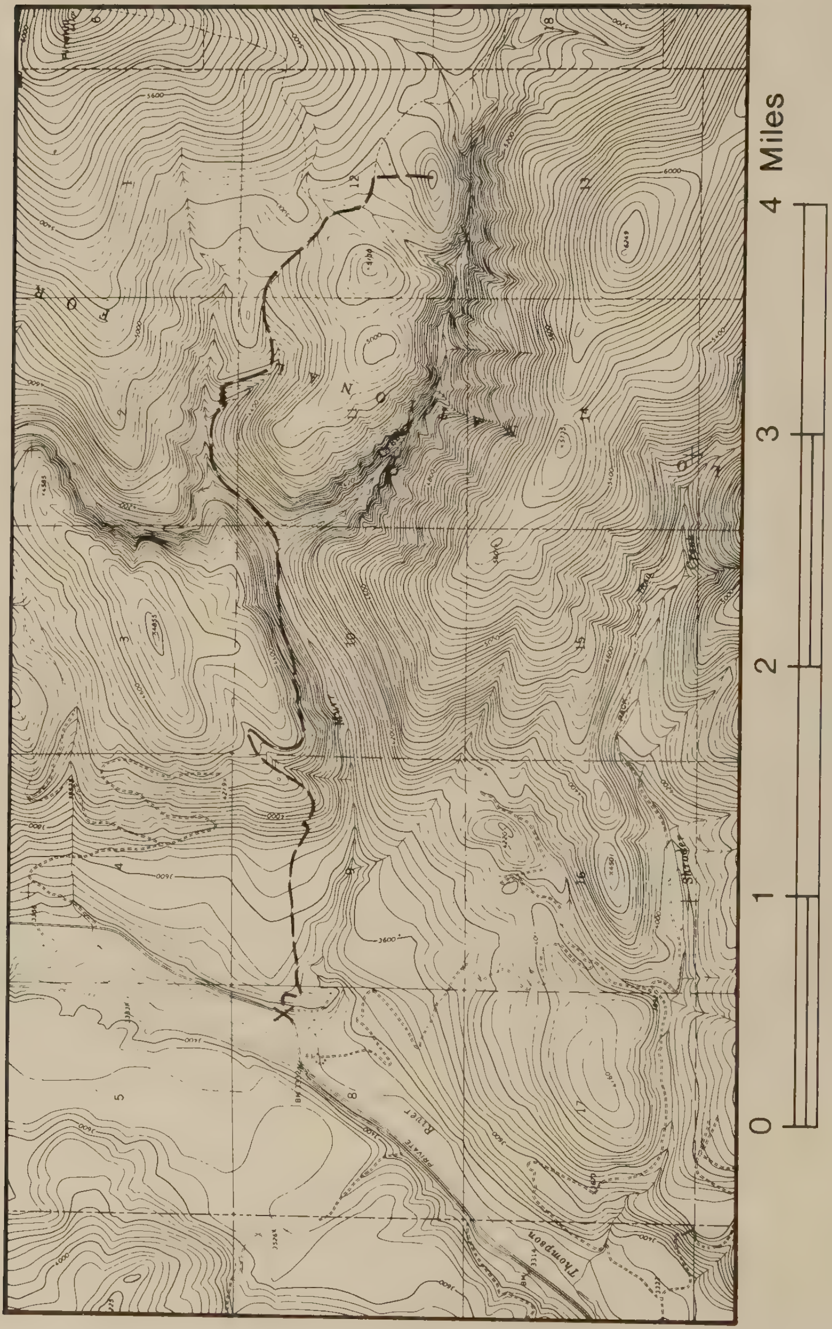
To find the trailhead, drive west from Kalispell on U.S. Highway 2 for forty miles to the Thompson River Road. Turn left (south) here and go slightly more than six miles until you see a trail sign on your left (east) for Murr Creek Trail #145. The Forest Service has relocated the early part of the trail along the creek.

The trail gradually climbs through deeply forested country along Murr Creek for about four miles to a junction with the old Pinehill Trail, which juts off to the northwest. About half a mile past this junction, a short spur trail takes off to the right just after crossing a creek in a deep gully. This spur trail, which goes about half a mile to a good viewpoint over Murr Canyon, is marked but hasn't been maintained for several years.

Murr Canyon is a lovely, steep-walled gorge with a waterfall at the east end where Murr Creek once again becomes a normal stream. On the way up, you can leave the trail and hike along the creek for about a mile to see this waterfall; you'll have to fight through heavy brush, though. It's best to try this in the spring.

The well-maintained trail gains only about 1,700 feet in elevation on the way to this hidden gorge. Although the trail has several places to get water, it also has some dry sections. The nine-mile round trip is easy enough for most hikers.

The trail to Murr Canyon is closed to motorized vehicles. Except for clearcuts at the beginning of the hike, in private land, the signs of civilization are few.
—Elaine Snyder


Thompson
River
PRIVATE
Shroder
Creek
PACK
MURR
0
1
2
3
4 Miles

The Bitterroot Range

Overview

The Bitterroot Range of the Lolo and Bitterroot National Forest separates Idaho from Montana. The range creates more than just a border; it gives hikers a common state of their own. A hike in the Bitterroot relies on the beauty and serenity of high mountain lake, streams, and peaks. State boundaries and ranger districts mean little high above distant cities.

The fiercely rugged Bitterroot Mountains extend from Lookout Pass south to Lost Trail Pass along the Idaho border. This includes the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Great Burn Proposed Wilderness, and Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. They are sliced by east-west valleys like Tin Cup, Lost Horse, Bear, Dry, and Blue Joint creeks. The granite crest of the Bitterroot is dotted with peaks, many around 10,000 feet high. The eastern flank of the mountains rise more than 5,000 feet in three miles. Hiking only a few miles into the Bitterroot is a different world, a haven for recreation.

Some mountain ranges are easy to fall in love with. The Bitterroot Range is one of them. One hike in the Bitterroots will bring you back year after year. Fishing, hiking, climbing, hunting, and wildlife viewing opportunities are plentiful. West Slope cutthroat trout thrive in the tributary streams that feed the Bitterroot River, threatened little by highly erosive granitic soils. Pick a canyon or ridge and follow it in. The Bitterroot is waiting.

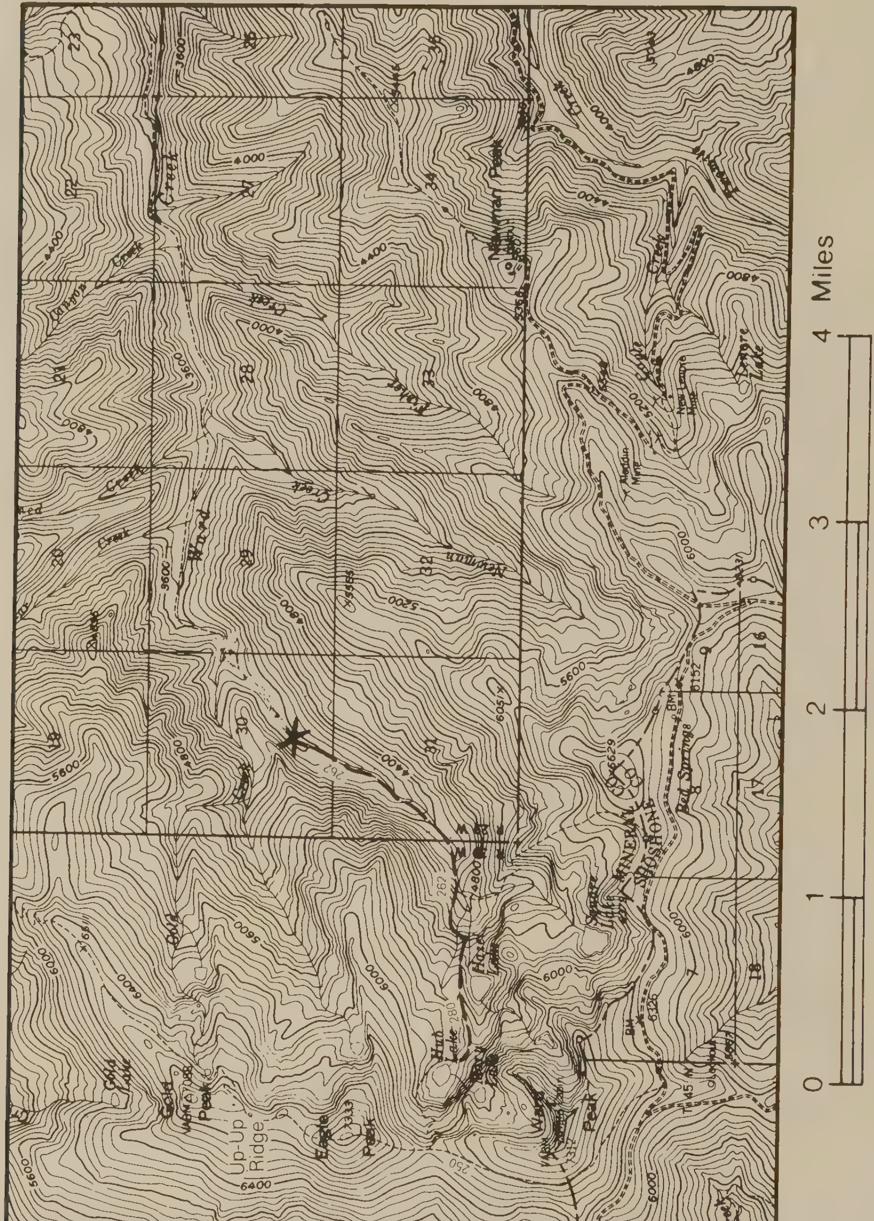
HIKE 14 *HUB LAKE, WARD AND EAGLE PEAKS*

General description: An excellent day or overnight family trip, with a number of short day trips from Hub Lake.
General location: 90 miles northwest of Missoula in the Bitterroot Mountains.
Maps: Haugan SW and Haugan SE USGS Quads, and Lolo National Forest Recreation Map.
Special attractions: Beautiful subalpine country on a scale small enough to be easily enjoyed by families with small children.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,500 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Superior Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Box 460, Superior, MT 59872, or call (406) 822-4233.

The hike: The Ward and Eagle peaks area is a "pocket wilderness" that, in spite of its small size, holds many scenic and recreational attractions.

It can be reached by taking Interstate 90 west from Missoula for fifty-seven miles to St. Regis. About eight miles past St. Regis, turn south (left) onto Ward Creek Road #889. Follow the Ward Creek Road for about eight miles, until it crosses Ward Creek. The signed trailhead is on the right side of the road just before it crosses the creek.

HIKE 14 *HUB LAKE, WARD AND EAGLE PEAKS*


Hub Lake
Hazel Lake
Ward Peak
Eagle Peak
Gold Peak
Gold Lake
Up-Up Ridge
Clear Lake
Square Lake
Newman Peak
Ward Creek
Red Springs
Mineral
Shoshone
Montana
Idaho
262
280
250
6400
5600
0
1
2
3
4
Miles

The first 1.5 miles of Ward Creek Trail #262 follows Ward Creek, so don't worry about carrying drinking water. Soon after the trailhead, the trail enters a beautiful, fern-bottomed, cedar grove with some cedars over six feet across at the base. Soon after leaving the grove, the trail overlooks Dipper Falls, a pleasant spot for a break.

After turning right at the first intersection onto Hub-Hazel Lake Trail #280, the next mile of walking is steep, consuming most of the 1,500 feet of altitude gained in the hike to Hub Lake. Here, the main diversion is picking huckleberries. About two miles from the trailhead, the trail passes Hazel Lake, which has pan-sized cutthroat, but its shores are too steep and brushy for camping.

Hub Lake is only half a mile beyond Hazel Lake. Take this hike anytime after June.

There are two campsites at Hub Lake. The one near the outlet is brushy but generally dry. The remains of an old prospector's cabin, now almost hidden in brush, lies between the trail and the campsite, and an abandoned mine overlooks the upper end of the lake. When dry, the meadows at the upper end of the lake offer good camping. Both campsites have plenty of firewood.

Although Hub Lake offers only fair fishing for cutthroat, it does lie in a picturesque subalpine setting. Hub Lake is also a good jumping-off spot for day hikes to Ward or Eagle peaks (both are within the capabilities of children) or fishing trips to Clear (rainbow), Gold (rainbow), Square (brook), and Hazel (cutthroat) lakes. You won't catch anything large, but you'll probably add fish to your campfire. You'll want the Haugan SW USGS Quad for the cross-country hiking needed to reach some of these lakes. Mary Lake, in the cirque below Warm Peak, has no fish, but it's a pleasant stop en route to Ward Peak.

Most of western Montana's big game species are found in this area, and if you're alert you have a chance of seeing them. Although grizzlies are gone from the Bitterroots, a good population of black bears remains.

The Lolo National Forest has not banned motorcycles from the trail to Hub Lake. However, there's little sign of cycle use, and, except for the clearcuts that can be seen from the peaks, there's no significant sign of man. The abandoned mining ruins gradually being reclaimed by nature contribute to the sense of being in the backcountry.

The Ward-Eagle peaks area offers small doses of the medicine that gives Montana's mountains their healing power—beautiful forests, waterfalls, wildlife, berries, interesting history, and fishing. And they are accessible to all hikers.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 15 *GREAT BURN LOOP*

General description: A 30-mile loop trip through the heart of the proposed Great Burn Wilderness.
General location: 30 miles west of Missoula.
Maps: Straight Peak USGS Quad and the Lolo National Forest Map.
Special attractions: Beautiful subalpine country along the Bitterroot Divide.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 5,460 feet.
Elevation loss: 5,400 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Ninemile Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, 20325 Remount Road, Huson, MT 59846, or call (406) 626-5201.

The hike: The Great Burn is a huge roadless area of almost 200,000 acres straddling the Idaho-Montana border, due west of Missoula. This superb loop hike will take you through long, timbered valleys and along open subalpine country on the Bitterroot Divide as well. But even this thirty-mile hike will only touch a small portion of the backcountry hiking in the Great Burn.

Drive west from Missoula on Interstate 90, and turn south at the Fish Creek exit onto Forest Road #343. After seven miles on #343 (which passes the largest ponderosa pine tree in the state), turn right on Forest Road #7750 and drive the remaining six miles to the trailhead at Clearwater Crossing.

The loop hike can be done in either direction, but this description goes counterclockwise up the North Fork of Fish Creek, along the Bitterroot Divide, returning to the trailhead via the West Fork of Fish Creek. You begin the loop by heading north on Trail #102 which eventually changes into Trail #103.

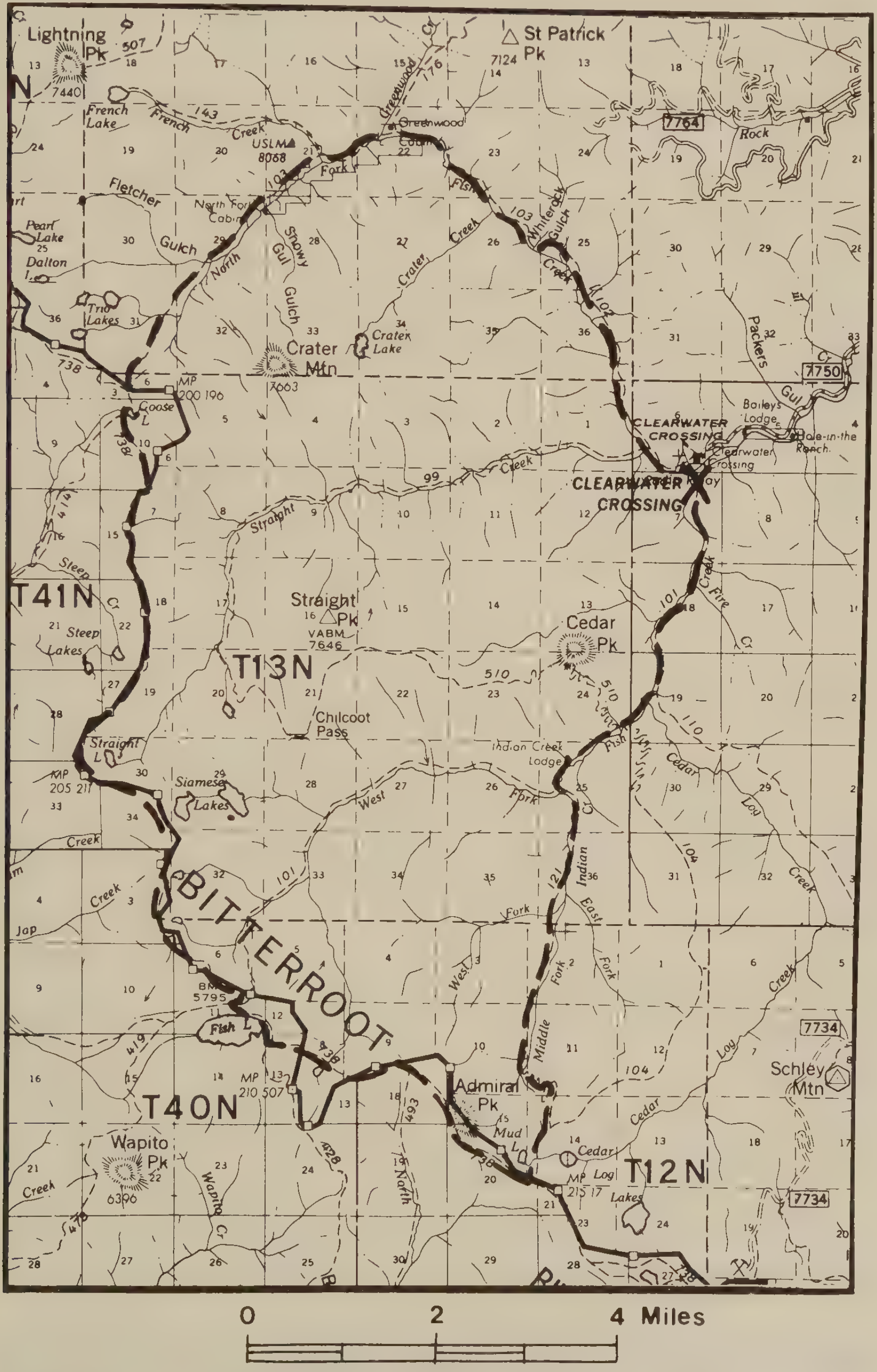
The first ten miles of the hike follow the North Fork of Fish Creek as it curves north and then west up to the Bitterroot Divide. From the five- to seven-mile mark, the trail passes through formerly private land next to the Greenwood and Northfork Cabins. These were once patented mining claims dating back to early 1900.

It's a steep, 1,000-foot ascent out of the upper North Fork basin to a low pass on the state line, where the trail descends into Idaho to Goose Lake and several good campsites. Fill up with water here, since the trail stays high and dry for the next nine miles.

From the low point on the pass near Goose Lake (5,840 feet in elevation), the trail rolls up and down over the minor summits of the northern Bitterroot Range, eventually reaching a high point of 7,334 feet. The trail (#738 on the Lolo Forest map) crosses the broad meadows and knife-edged ridges as it follows the crest of the divide south to Fish Lake. Here, you are in the very center of the proposed Great Burn Wilderness, and views extend in every direction. On clear days, the tops of the Mission Mountains appear far to the east; the crumpled ranges of the huge Bighorn-Weitas roadless country stretch off to the west in Idaho. Wildflowers are spectacular early in the summer, and ghostly snags remind the hiker of the Great Burn that swept through this country in August 1910.

The trail is dry all the way to Fish Lake, but you may be able to bushwhack

HIKE 15 *GREAT BURN LOOP*


Lightning Pk
7440
French Lake
French Creek
143
507
St Patrick Pk
7124
Greenwood
Greenwood Cabin
USLM
8068
Fork
103
Fletcher Gulch
North Fork Cabin
North
Showy Gulch
Fish
Crater Creek
Whitetail Gulch
Creek
7764
Rock
Pearl Lake
Dalton L.
Trio Lakes
738
Crater Mtn
7663
Crater Lake
Packers Gul
7750
Cr
MP 200 196
Goose L
CLEARWATER CROSSING
Baileys Lodge
Hole-in-the Ranch
Clearwater Crossing
99
Creek
Straight
CLEARWATER CROSSING
414
Steep
T41N
Steep Lakes
Straight Pk
VABM 7646
T13N
101
Fire Creek
Cedar Pk
510
Chilcoot Pass
Straight L
MP 205 211
Siamese Lakes
Indian Creek Lodge
West Fork
Fish
110
Cedar
Log
Creek
BITTERROOT
Creek
Jap
Indian
East
104
121
Fork
West
Middle Fork
East Fork
Creek
BM 5795
Fish L
419
MP 210 507
738
493
T40N
Admiral Pk
Mud L
7734
Schley Mtn
Wapito Pk
6396
Creek
Wapito Cr
478
North
Cedar
Log Lakes
MP 215 17
T12N
7734
0
2
4 Miles

down to several of the subalpine lakes that hug both sides of the range and camp within reach of the divide trail.

The route turns northward down the West Fork of Fish Creek some nine miles after leaving Goose Lake. If you wish to enjoy another day high on the divide, you can take a short detour southward to Fish Lake on the Idaho side of the range before continuing down the West Fork.

From the divide trail, it's about ten miles down to Clearwater Crossing and your vehicle. The central portion of this stretch is quite boggy and might slow your progress enough to encourage you to linger at one of the several campsites along the West Fork. The trail (#101) also passes through groves of old western red cedars, western larch, and big lodgepoles, which make this valley hiking much more pleasant than most valley trails.

Bear problems seem nonexistent along this hike, although there are reports of occasional grizzly sightings in the wild country of the Great Burn.

The Bitterroot Divide gets more snow than most parts of Montana, so don't attempt this loop before July 4. It might be worth your while to check on snow conditions with the Forest Service before you try an early July hike in a heavy snow year. Being wet country, bugs can be a problem, so bring something to keep them at bay.

Although recommended for wilderness protection by the Forest Service during RARE II, timber sales continue to nibble away at the edges of the Great Burn. Check with your local conservation organization for a progress report on the Great Burn wilderness proposal.—*Ed Madej* .

HIKE 16 *HEART AND PEAL LAKES*

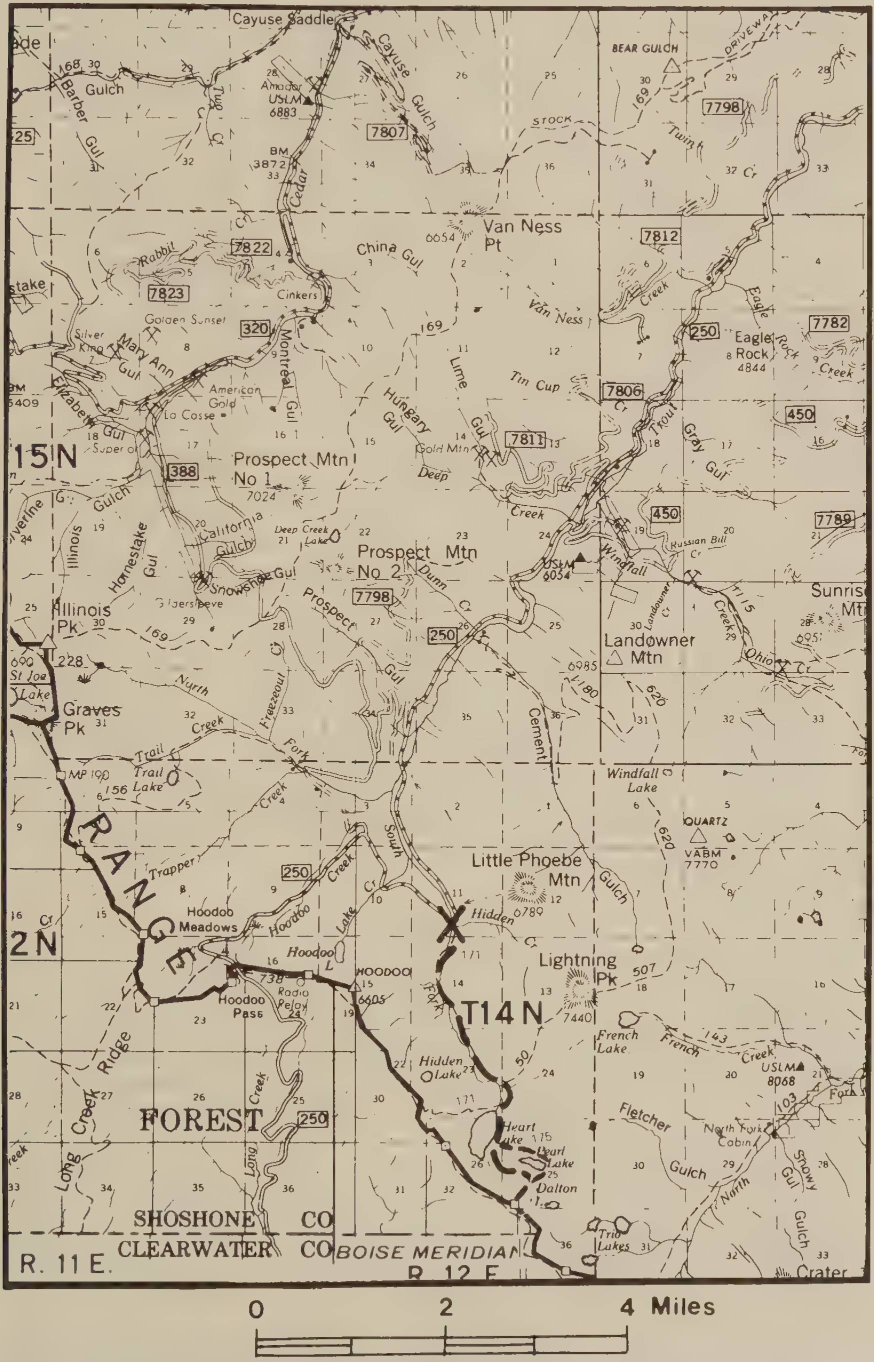
General description: A short day hike to a subalpine lake basin.
General location: 70 miles west of Missoula.
Maps: Straight Peak USGS Quad and the Lolo National Forest Map.
Special attractions: Cutthroat trout in the lakes and huckleberries in the bushes.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,200 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Superior Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Box 460, Superior, MT 59872, or call (406) 822-4233.

The hike: The proposed Great Burn Wilderness sprawls for almost forty miles along the Bitterroot Divide due west of Missoula. This short hike is sure to tantalize you with the hiking possibilities in this 200,000-acre area, which is one of the wilder roadless areas in Montana.

Drive west from Missoula on Interstate 90 and turn south on the Trout Creek Road (Forest Road #250) from the Superior exit. After about nineteen miles, the road makes a sharp switchback to the right. At this switchback, signed Heart Lake Trail #171 leads south from the road.

The trail climbs some 1,200 feet in two miles to the shore of Heart Lake, crossing the South Fork of Trout Creek several times. In late August and early

HIKE 16 *HEART AND PEARL LAKES*


Cayuse Saddle
Cayuse Gulch
Amador USLM 6883
7807
BEAR GULCH
DRIVEWAY
STOCK
7798
Twin Cr
Barber Gul
Gulch
Tag Cr
BM 3872
Cedar
Van Ness Pt
6654
China Gul
7812
Creek
Rabbit
7822
7823
Cinkers
Golden Sunset
320
Silver King
Mary Ann Gul
Montreal Gul
Van Ness
169
Lime
250
Eagle Rock 4844
Eagle Rock Creek
7782
American Gold
La Cosse
Elizabeth Gul
Tin Cup
7806
Trout Cr
Hungary Gul
Gold Mtn
7811
Gray Gul
450
BM 5409
Superior
15N
Prospect Mtn No 1
7024
388
Deep
Creek
Gulch
Illinois
Homestake Gul
California Gulch
Deep Creek Lake
Prospect Mtn No 2
Dunn Cr
USLM 6054
Windfall
Russian Bill Cr
7789
Snowshoe Gul
Silversleeve
7798
Prospect Gul
Landowner Cr
Creek
Sunrise Mtn
Illinois Pk
169
250
Landowner Mtn
Ohio Cr
St Joe Lake
228
North
Freezeout Cr
6985
180
620
Graves Pk
Creek
Cement
Trail
Trail Lake
MP 190
156
Fork
Creek
Windfall Lake
QUARTZ
VABM 7770
620
RANGE
Trapper
250
Creek
South
Little Phoebe Mtn
Gulch
Hoodoo Meadows
Hoodoo
Lake Cr
Hidden
6789
Cr
2N
Hoodoo L
HOODOO 6605
171
Lightning Pk
7440
507
738
Radio Relay
Hoodoo Pass
Fork
T14N
French Lake
French Creek
143
Ridge
Hidden Lake
50
USLM 8068
Fork
Creek
FOREST
250
Heart Lake 175
Pearl Lake
Dalton L
Fletcher Gulch
North Fork Cabin
103
Long Creek
Long
North
Snowy Gul
SHOSHONE CO
CLEARWATER CO
BOISE MERIDIAN
Trio Lakes
Gulch
Crater
R. 11 E.
R. 12 E.
0
2
4 Miles

September, ripe huckleberries line the trail and make this trek memorable for its incredible edibles.

Heart Lake has a good population of fishable cutthroat, and it makes a good turnaround point for day hikers. If you wish to explore farther, you have three options.

Pearl Lake Trail #175 climbs higher up the lake basin, past Pearl Lake, and over a low pass to Dalton Lake. Pearl appears to be too turbid for good fishing, but Dalton Lake has small trout and the advantage of being more remote (and less fished) than Heart Lake.

A steep trail leads westward from Heart Lake to the Bitterroot Divide (see the Great Burn Loop hike description) and the Idaho border, providing astounding views of vast roadless country in the forested mountains of our neighboring state.

A third trail, #620, unmarked and primitive, leads to the 7,440-foot summit of Lightning Peak, just east of Heart Lake, and eventually drops down into Cement Gulch and returns to the Trout Creek road. However, most hikers will want to return by way of Heart Lake to their vehicles and skip this eight-mile-long side trip.

Late summer is the best time to appreciate this hike, when the bugs are gone, the berries are ripe, and hunting season has not yet begun.—*Bill Cunningham*

HIKE 17 *STATELINE TRAIL SOUTH*

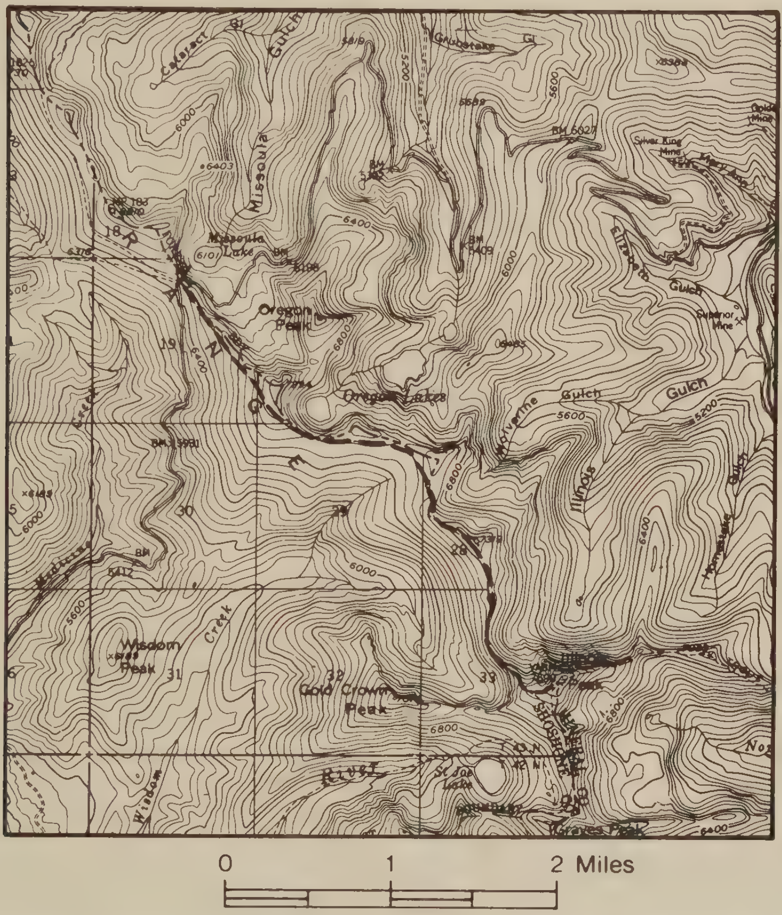
General description: An easy day hike.
General location: 45 miles west of Missoula in the Bitterroot Mountains.
Maps: Illinois Peak NW, Illinois Peak SW, Illinois Peak SE, and Hoodoo USGS Quads; and Lolo National Forest Recreation Map.
Special attraction: A grassy mountaintop with an excellent view of the northern Bitterroot Mountains.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,200 feet.
Season: Mid-July to October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Superior Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Box 460, Superior, MT 59872, or call (406) 822-4233.

The hike: Perhaps because the higher portions of the Bitterroot Mountains north of Lolo Pass aren't visible from a major highway, they remain relatively unknown. On a map they are easily overlooked and underrated; none of the peaks reach 8,000 feet.

Because they're among the westernmost of Montana's mountain ranges, the Bitterroots receive an abundance of rain and snow. The result is an abundance of alpine scenery at lower elevations than in most mountain ranges. At 7,690 feet, Illinois Peak is one of the highest peaks in the northern Bitterroots. The walk to the top goes through pleasant subalpine country and offers lots of scenic views, as does the peak itself.

From Missoula, take Interstate 90 west to Superior. After taking the Superior

HIKE 17 *STATELINE TRAIL SOUTH*


Cataract
Missoula Gulch
Grubstake
Missoula Lake
Oregon Peak
Oregon Lakes
Silver King Mine
Elizabeth Gulch
Superior Mine
Wolverine Gulch
Gulch
Illinois
Illinois Peak
Wisdom Peak
Creek
Gold Crown Peak
River
St Joe Lake
Graves Peak
Wisdom
SHOSHONE
BM 6027
BM 5981
6000
6400
6800
5600
5200
18
19
28
29
30
31
32
33
0
1
2 Miles

exit, turn left and go under the freeway, and then turn left again onto the paved road on the far side of the underpass. About 1.5 miles down the county road, the Cedar Creek Road takes off into the foothills to the right. Follow this winding road for twenty miles to the Bitterroot (or Stateline) Divide, which is clearly marked.

At the divide, take Stateline Trail #738 on the left to the southeast. In 1981, this trail was designated a National Recreation Trail, in recognition of its outstanding recreational qualities. As a result, no motorized vehicles are allowed on it. The route along the divide has been used since aboriginal times, and the National Recreation Trail portion stretches 18.3 miles from near Eagle Cliff on the north to Hoodoo Pass on the south. The trail and the pass are dry, so stock up on water at one of the creeks you'll cross while driving to the trailhead.

The trail is faint in places, but by sticking close to the divide you'll be sure to find it again. It's about five miles from the trailhead to Illinois Peak, which makes this a ten-mile round-trip.

The Mission and southern Bitterroot mountains and vast roadless areas in the Idaho Panhandle are frequently in view. Illinois Peak, 1,200 feet higher than the trailhead, offers a good view of much of the proposed Great Burn Wilderness to the southeast. Illinois Peak's grassy top is a good place to sit back and enjoy lunch.

On this hike, the wind will keep you cool and the bugs down. This is a good hike from mid-July to mid-October.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 18 *STATELINE TRAIL NORTH*

General description: An easy overnight or day round-trip, or, if two vehicles are used, a mostly downhill point-to-point hike.
General location: 50 miles west of Missoula in the Bitterroot Mountains.
Maps: Illinois Peak SE and Illinois Peak SW USGS Quads, and the Lolo National Forest Recreation Map.
Special attractions: An abundance of easily accessible subalpine country.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 370 feet.
Elevation loss: 514 feet.
Season: Mid-July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Superior Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Box 460, Superior, MT 59872, or call (406) 822-4233.

The hike: Most Montanans think of the spectacular eastern front of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness when the Bitterroot Mountains are mentioned. However, from Lolo Pass north to Lookout Pass lies a section of the Bitterroots with a slightly different, but equally appealing, character. Although the northern Bitterroots are less craggy than their southern counterparts, they are heavily dotted with lakes. There are more than forty fishable lakes on the Montana side of the Bitterroot Divide, most within an easy walk from a trailhead. Because of the fire that swept through much of the area in 1910, these mountains feature a more open, easily traversable terrain.

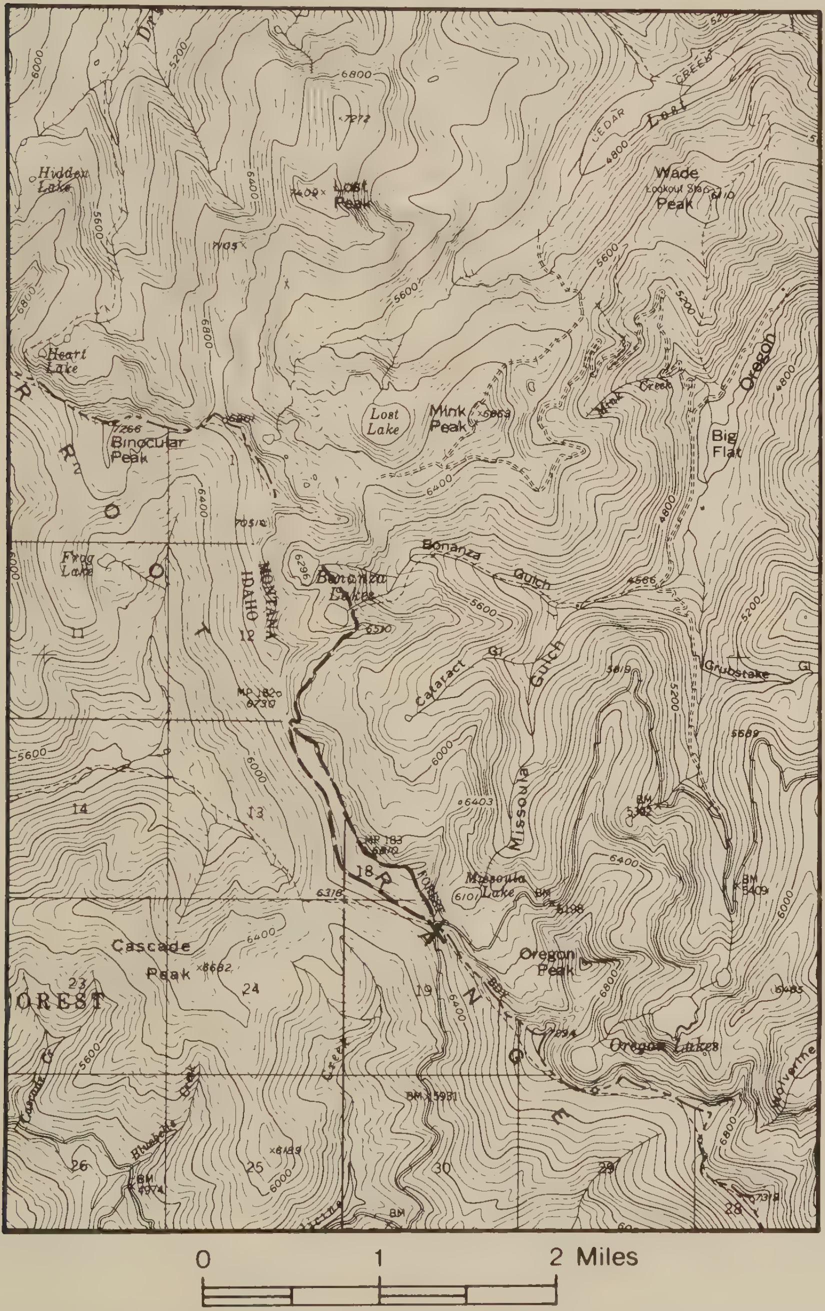
The Stateline Trail runs northwest from where Cedar Creek Road crosses the Bitterroot (or Stateline) Divide. To get there from Missoula, take Interstate 90 west to Superior. Exit at Superior, and turn left to go under the freeway. Take another left just beyond the underpass onto the paved county road. After 1.5 miles, turn right onto the Cedar Creek Road. Follow it for twenty winding miles to the clearly marked divide and trailhead.

At the trailhead, you have two options. One is to take Stateline Trail #738, which takes off just to the left (Idaho) side of the divide. It quickly splits, and the left fork drops down into Idaho. Take the right fork, which follows a contour along the Idaho side of the ridge. All forks are well marked.

The trail forks again 1.5 miles beyond the trailhead. Again, take the right fork back across the divide into Montana and through a grassy basin for about one mile to Bonanza Lakes.

Both routes are about two miles long and have a small elevation loss from

HIKE 18 *STATELINE TRAIL NORTH*


Hidden Lake
Lost Peak
Wade Lookout Sta. Peak
Cedar Creek
Heart Lake
Binocular Peak
Lost Lake
Mink Peak
Mink Creek
Oregon
Big Flat
Frog Lake
Bonanza Lakes
Bonanza Gulch
Montana
Idaho
Cataract Gl
Missoula Gulch
Grubstake Gl
MP 182
MP 183
Missoula Lake
Oregon Peak
Cascade Peak
Oregon Lakes
Bluebell
Wolverine
Bitterroot National Forest
0
1
2 Miles

trailhead to lakes, so they are suited for hikers of all ages and abilities. Bring drinking water, as both routes are dry.

A pleasant, open campsite with plenty of firewood is located between the two lakes, slightly closer to the larger, upper lake. Both lakes contain small brook trout.

The Stateline Trail, which was designated a National Recreational Trail in 1981, goes beyond Bonanza Lake along the divide past Eagle Cliff to the northwest. This makes an excellent through hike if you leave another car on Dry Creek Road #342 where it crosses the Bitterroot Divide.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 19 *MACLAY FLAT*

General description: A pleasant, flat 1.25- to 1.8-mile loop trail for all abilities.
General location: Near Blue Mountain Recreation Area southwest of Missoula.
Maps: Blue Mountain USGS Quad or Trails Missoula map.
Special attractions: Sixteen newly-installed interpretive signs describe the river system, wildlife, vegetation, and archeology of this area.
Difficulty: Easy/Wheelchair Accessible.
Season: March through November.
Information: District Ranger, Missoula Ranger district, Lolo National Forest, Building 24-A, Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59801, or call (406) 329-3750.

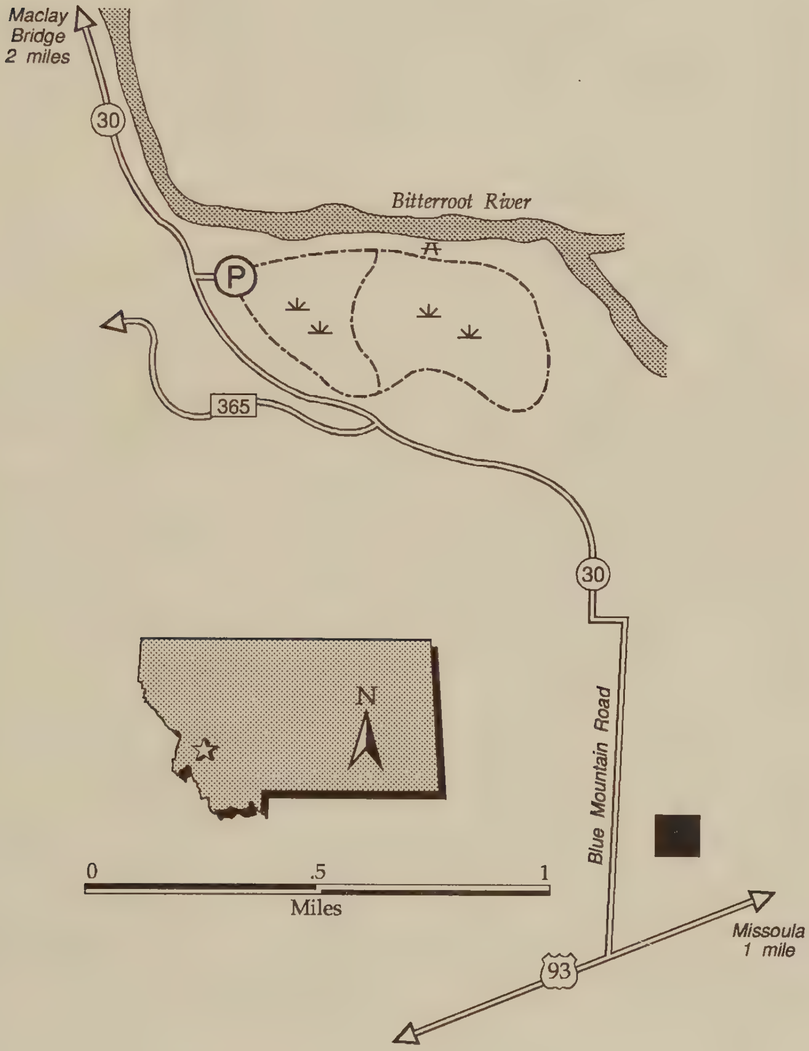
The hike: For an easy-going, interesting outing beyond the city limits, try the new trail at Maclay Flat. The path is wide, level, and surfaced to accommodate wheelchairs. It goes along the Bitterroot River and through adjacent meadows with some great views of the mountains around Missoula.

Drive south on U.S. Highway 93 one mile from Missoula and turn right at the Western Montana Sports Medicine Center (a huge glass building at the corner of Blue Mountain Road and US 93). Drive on Blue Mountain Road for 1.5 miles. The parking lot for Maclay Flat is on the right. There are wheelchair-accessible restrooms at the parking area. Note: horses and bicycles are not allowed on this trail, and you must keep pets on a leash.

The complete 1.8 mile trail heads in a clockwise direction, with a cutoff trail option to shorten the loop to 1.25 miles. About a third of a mile down the trail, you'll come to a flat grassy area along the river. This is a good picnicking spot with tables. The loop continues along the southern end of the meadow, giving you the opportunity to watch for birds and other wildlife. Interpretive signs along the way provide information about the vegetation and geology of the area, such as the meandering nature of the Bitterroot River here. The trails end up back at the parking lot for the shorter and longer loops.

A number of Missoula community groups have cooperated with Lolo National Forest to develop and maintain this quality addition to Missoula's trail system.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 19 *MACLAY FLATS*


Maclay Bridge 2 miles
30
Bitterroot River
P
365
30
Blue Mountain Road
N
0
.5
1
Miles
Missoula 1 mile
93

HIKE 20 *PETERSON LAKES*

General description: A tough 10-mile day hike or a good overnight stop to explore several high mountain lakes.
General location: In the Bitterroot Mountains just south of Florence.
Maps: Carlton Lakes, Dick Creek, and St. Marys Peak USGS Quads and Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Map.
Special attractions: Views of Sweeney Canyon and the surrounding peaks.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,008 ft.
Elevation loss: 1,315 ft.
Season: Mid-June through September.
Information: District Ranger, Stevensville Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 88 Main Street, Stevensville, MT 59870, or call (406) 777-5461.

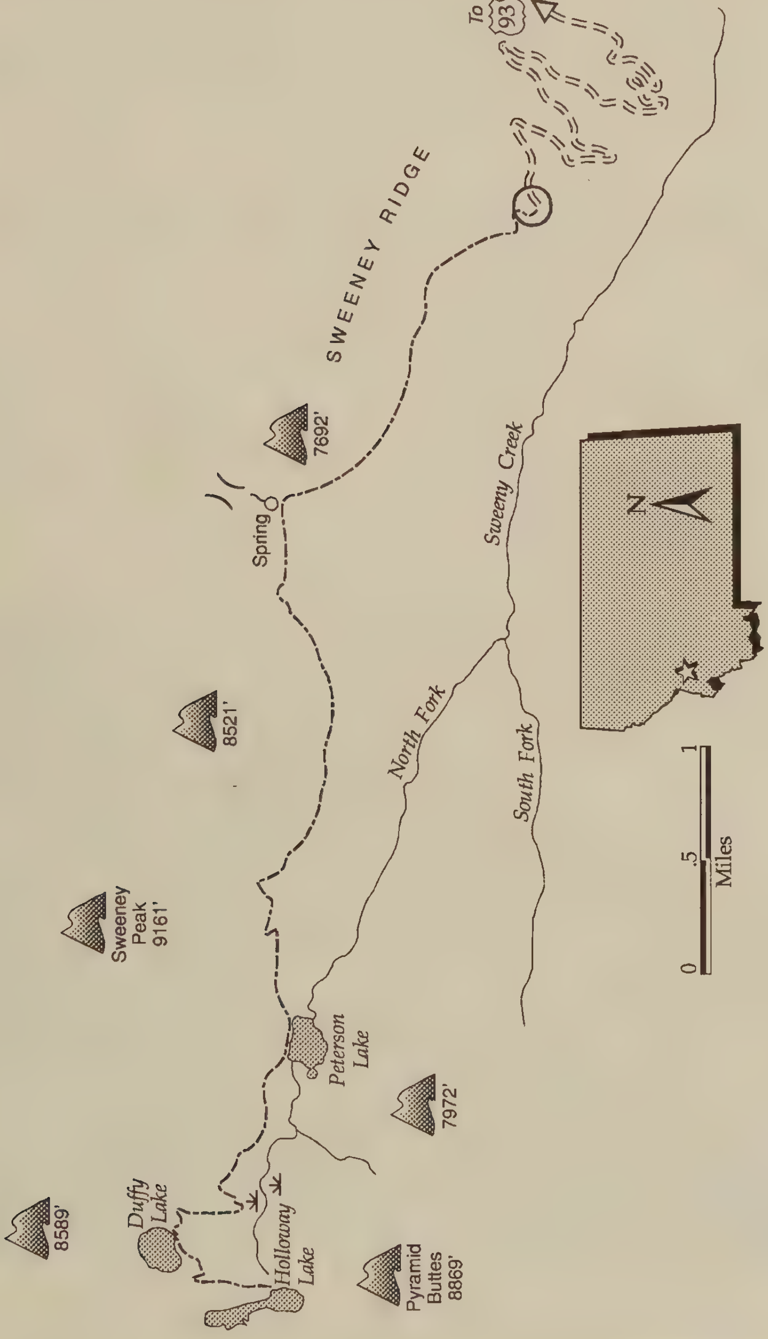
The hike: This hike is close to the Missoula area, so you might see a few other hikers on busy summer weekends. But the hike is pleasant. It is an excellent overnight hike to absorb the joys of hiking and the ancient trees along the trail. Duffy, Holloway, and Peterson Lakes all have fish. Though at Peterson Lake, there is not much room for a back cast except at the inlet.

Drive south of Missoula on U.S. Highway 93 past Florence for 1.5 miles. Turn right heading west on Sweeney Creek Road. Shortly after turning, the paved road veers to the left; but you need to follow the dirt road to the right. About 1.5 miles from US 93 turn right again and drive for six miles to the trailhead. The last section of switchbacks is steep, rough, and might be difficult for a car. The trailhead has a few parking spaces and no restrooms.

The trail climbs steadily west along Sweeney Ridge for two miles before reaching a natural spring. Be sure to carry enough water for the climb. Along the way, you may want to note the girth of some of the remaining Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, some four feet in diameter. Also, midway to the spring there is a large rock outcropping perfect for pictures. If you use the right angle, it will look as if you were atop a mountain above the Bitterroot. From the spring, continue climbing up Sweeney Ridge until dropping down into the valley to Peterson Lake. It is five miles to Peterson lake and there are campsites at the inlet.

If you feel ambitious, continue on to Duffy and Holloway Lakes. Duffy is another two miles of climbing. However, consider that the farther from civilization you travel the fish are not as wary.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 20 *PETERSON LAKES*


To 93
SWEENEY RIDGE
7692'
Spring
Sweeny Creek
N
8521'
North Fork
South Fork
0
.5
1
Miles
Sweeney Peak 9161'
Peterson Lake
7972'
8589'
Duffy Lake
Holloway Lake
Pyramid Buttes 8869'

HIKE 21 *BLODGETT CANYON*

General description: An easy day or overnight hike.
General location: 5 miles northwest of Hamilton in the Bitterroot Mountains.
Maps: Printz Ridge USGS Quad and the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Map.
Special attractions: Spectacular scenery, rock climbing.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 1,160 feet.
Season: June through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Stevensville Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 88 Main Street, Stevensville, MT 59870, or call (406) 777-5461.

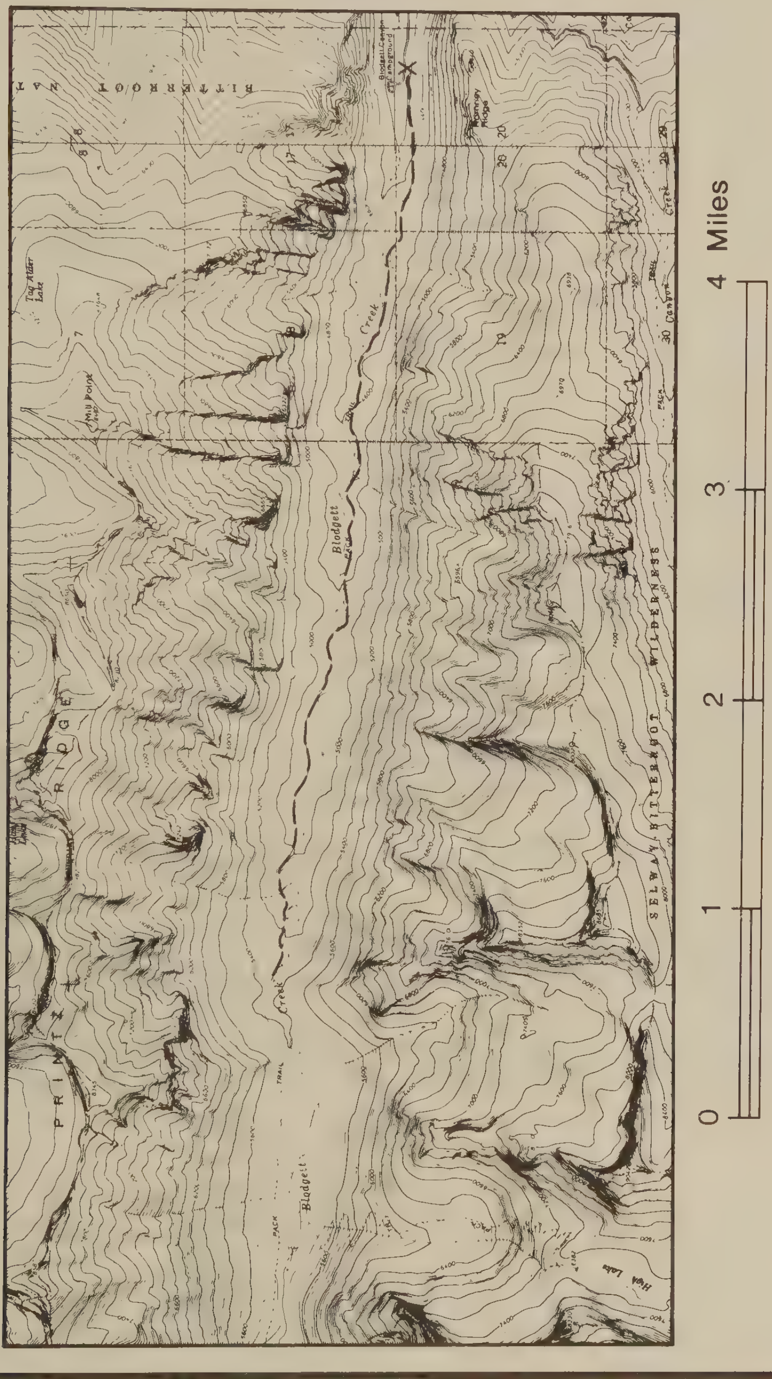
The hike: There's a tendency to think of hiking as something you do to get somewhere. In Blodgett Canyon, no object is necessary beyond the hike itself. Just a hundred yards from the car, you'll be walking along a beautiful stream and looking up at spectacular canyon walls.

These basic scenic ingredients continue throughout the hike. Because there's no need to get to any particular point and there are ample campsites along the way, a hike up Blodgett Canyon is ideal for families and anyone who enjoys unhurried walking with lots of pleasant stops.

To get to the Blodgett Canyon trailhead, take U.S. Highway 93 south from

Blodgett Canyon in the Bitterroot National Forest. Forest Service photo.

HIKE 21 *BLODGETT CANYON*



BITTERROOT NAT
Blodgett Canyon Campground
Romney Ridge
Tag Alder Lake
Mill Point
Blodgett Creek
Pack Trail
PRINTZ RIDGE
SELWAY BITTERROOT WILDERNESS
Canyon Creek
High Lake
0
1
2
3
4 Miles

Scenic delights along Blodgett Creek in the Bitterroot Mountains. Forest Service photo.

Missoula through the Bitterroot Valley. Turn west (right) onto Bowman Road two miles north of Hamilton just before US 93 crosses the Bitterroot River. Follow this road west for half a mile, south for two miles on Richetts Road, and then west again for the last two miles to the trailhead on Forest Road #736.

Blodgett Canyon is the most spectacular of the many canyons penetrating the east front of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The vertical relief from canyon bottom to ridge tops is nearly 4,000 feet. Blodgett Creek itself, like all the streams in the Bitterroots, is clear and cold (but may expose you to *Giardia*). It also has good fishing for pan-sized rainbows. But consider catch and release practices for the lower heavily fished section of Blodgett Creek. The trail, which is never steep for extended periods, generally goes through pleasant forest environment, sometimes crosses talus slopes, and is always close to Blodgett Creek. Sheer granite faces of five hundred to six hundred feet are common on the north side of the canyon, and there are several waterfalls between three and six miles into the hike.

Because the trail stays low, it is passable earlier than many hikes. Chances of seeing wildlife increase farther up the canyon. Moose, elk, and deer are found in Blodgett, and mountain goats range the ridge tops. If you're willing to tackle the steep, 1,400-foot climb up to High Lake, on the south rim of the canyon, you have a good chance of seeing mountain goats. The trail to High Lake is not maintined and hard to follow.

Although you can hike a full twenty miles up the canyon, most hikers take shorter day or overnight hikes into the area. Go until you feel like stopping and either pick a campsite or turn back to the trailhead. Use no trace methods if you have a fire.

Although Blodgett Canyon is surrounded by the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, only the upper portion (seven miles from the trailhead), is part of it. When the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness was set aside in 1939, most of Blodgett Canyon was excluded because it was considered a possible site for a dam and reservoir for Bitterroot Valley water users. Lower Blodgett Canyon was included in the proposed 1988 Wilderness Bill vetoed by President Reagan. *—John Westenberg*

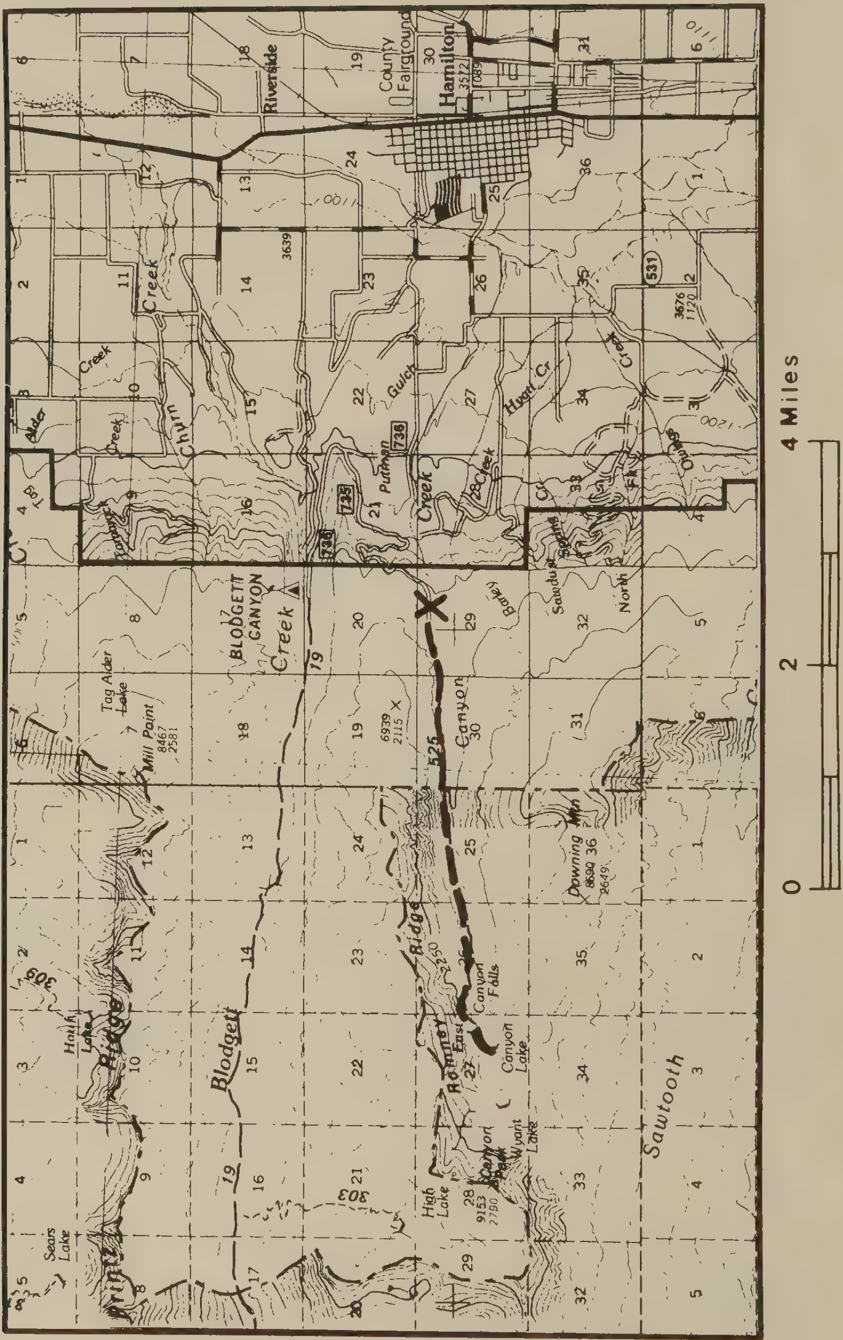
HIKE 22 *CANYON FALLS*

General description: A pleasant day hike in the Bitterroot Range.
General location: 7 miles west of Hamilton in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness.
Maps: Printz Ridge and Ward Mountain USGS Quads, and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Map.
Special attraction: The spectacular drops of Canyon Falls.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 650 feet.
Season: Mid-May to October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Stevensville Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 88 Main St., Stevensville, MT 59870, or call (406) 777-5461.

The hike: Canyon Falls is one of the prettier, more accessible waterfalls in the Bitterroot Range. It's an easy day hike from the Bitterroot Valley.

Turn west onto a county road from U.S. Highway 93 just before it crosses the Bitterroot River, two miles north of Hamilton. Follow this road west for half a mile, south for 1.75 miles, and then west until it intersects Forest Road #735. Follow FR #735 to the trailhead on Canyon Creek.

HIKE 22 *CANYON FALLS*


Hamilton
County Fairground
Riverside
Creek
Chaffin Creek
Alder Creek
Gulch
Putnam
738
735
BLODGETT CANYON
Blodgett Creek
Tag Alder Lake
Mill Point 8467 2581
6939 2115
525
Canyon
Canyon Creek
Hayes Cr
Bailey
Sawdust Creek
North Fk
Downing Mtn 8690 2649
Canyon Falls
East
Romney Ridge
Canyon Lake
Canyon Peak 9153 2790
High Lake
Wyant Lake
Sawtooth
Hauf Lake
Printz Ridge
Sears Lake
303
309
19
531
3676 1120
3639
3572 1089
4 Miles
2
0

The trail stays to the northern side of the creek, avoiding stream crossings, and reaches Canyon Falls in about three miles. Canyon Falls is actually a series of cataracts along the stream, with the total drop approaching two hundred feet. The view of the falls from the trail is spectacular, especially in May or June when the creek is swollen with snowmelt. Don't be tempted to clamber closer, though; the rotten rock and slippery footing invite accidents.

If you're out for more than a day hike, continue up past the falls for half a mile to Canyon Lake, which has a few campsites along its northern shore. From a camp on Canyon Lake, it's an easy stroll farther up the canyon to Wyant Lake. If you're interested in a little mountaineering, you can go beyond Wyant Lake and ascend Canyon Peak (9,153 feet) via its rocky southern ridge.

Canyon Creek drains one of the smaller canyons penetrating the east side of the Bitterroots, but what it lacks in size it makes up for in scenic beauty. This is one of the smaller gems in the vast Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.—*Don Reed*

HIKE 23 *TRAPPER PEAK*

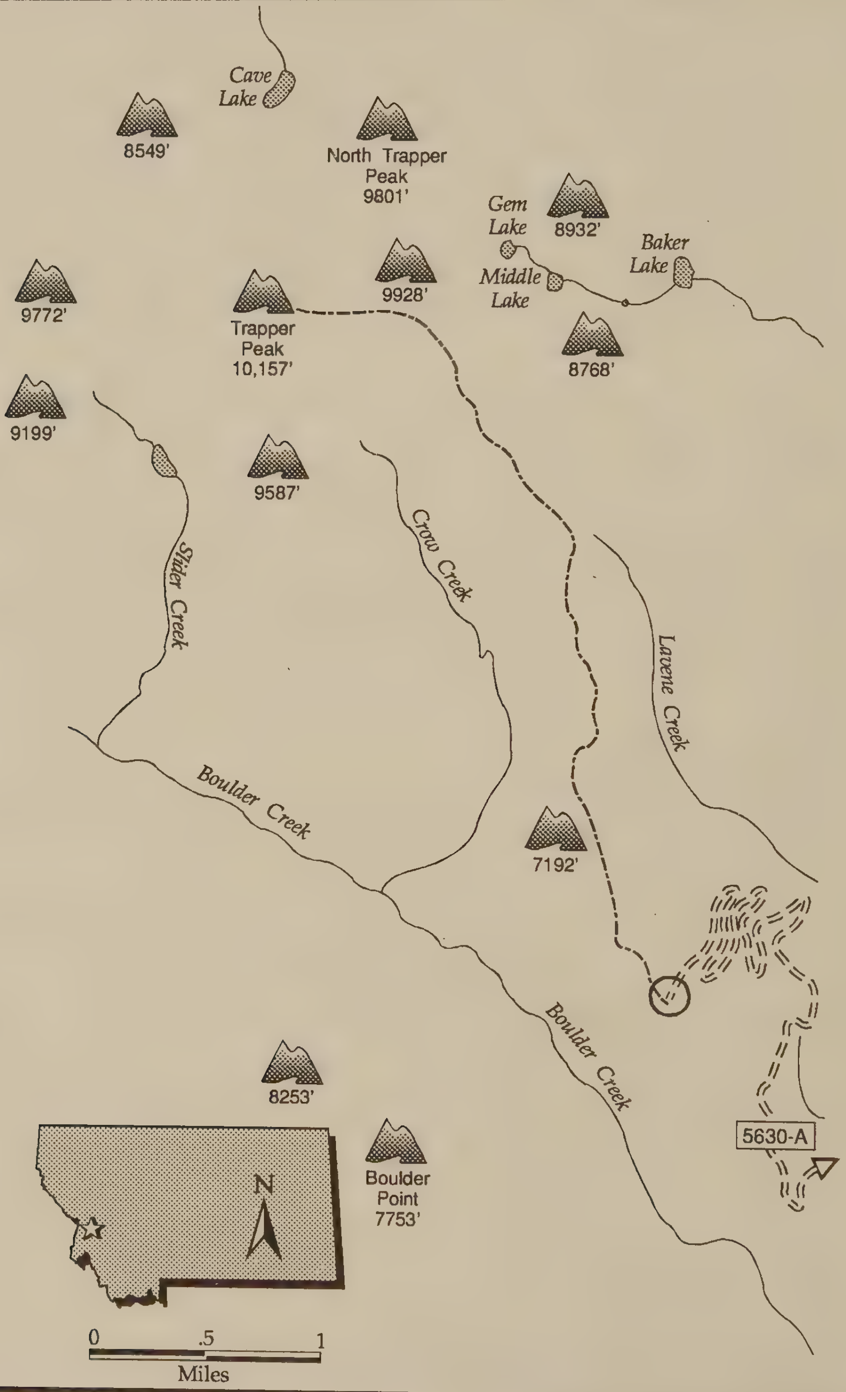
General description: A tough 12-mile, round-trip day hike up one of the Bitterroot's most majestic mountains.
General location: In the Bitterroot Range south of Darby.
Maps: Trapper Peak, Piquet Creek, and Boulder Peak USGS Quads and Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Map.
Special attractions: A sweeping view high above the rugged Bitterroot Mountains.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,775 ft.
Season: Late July through August.
Information: District Ranger, West Fork Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 6735 West Fork Road, Darby, MT 59829, or call (406) 821-8269.

The hike: Until late July, snow covers much of the trail. The almost 4,000 feet of elevation gain in six miles is the reason for the ''difficult'' rating. The hike is less significant, considering the destination. From the top of Trapper Peak the world falls away into endless cascades of rocky ridges.

To find the trailhead, drive south of Darby on U.S. Highway 93 for six miles and turn right onto Connors Cutoff Road. After a mile on the Connors Cutoff Road, turn left on Montana Highway 473 and head south for eight miles. Take Forest Road 5630-A that leaves the highway on the right, heading west for 0.5 miles then continues up switchbacks for another 6.5 miles to trailhead. The trailhead has no facilities and parking is scarce. Be careful not to block the road.

The trail climbs abruptly from the parking lot along the ridge above Boulder Creek to the south. The first part of the hike involves two steep climbs with a flat spot in between. The break is enough to lower your heartbeat a little. At early rest stops, take extra time to walk the twenty feet to the edge of the ridge for a taste of the view from the top. The Boulder Creek valley was formed by glaciation, creating a long narrow, ice-gouged trough common to the eastern slope of the Bitterroot.

HIKE 23 *TRAPPER PEAK*


Cave Lake
8549'
North Trapper Peak 9801'
Gem Lake
8932'
Baker Lake
9772'
Trapper Peak 10,157'
9928'
Middle Lake
8768'
9199'
9587'
Slider Creek
Crow Creek
Lavene Creek
Boulder Creek
7192'
Boulder Creek
8253'
5630-A
Boulder Point 7753'
N
0
.5
1
Miles

After the first two miles, the trail climbs gradually. A little less than half way up is a small stream close to the trail. The gurgling water is audible from the trail and a small path veers off to the right. This is a good spot to replenish water bottles.

After the stream, the trail climbs steadily up and out of the trees. The view opens up to a world of ice-sculptured granite peaks and high altitude weather patterns. Montana is known for unpredictable weather, and at 10,000 feet it can snow in July.

Once out in the open it is necessary to follow the cairns that mark the trail. Often the trail is hard to follow on the exposed rock. The route traverses across the south face of Trapper Peak angling toward the summit.

From the top, look for the sharp glaciated ridgelines and peaks of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. More than 500,000 acres of this 1.3 million-acre wilderness are located on the Bitterroot National Forest. Unprotected areas like parts of Trapper Creek to the north are currently proposed for wilderness designation.

The hike out is hard on the knees. And the view of timber in the West Fork valley below is dotted with clear-cuts. So no hike is perfect.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 24 *KERLEE LAKE*

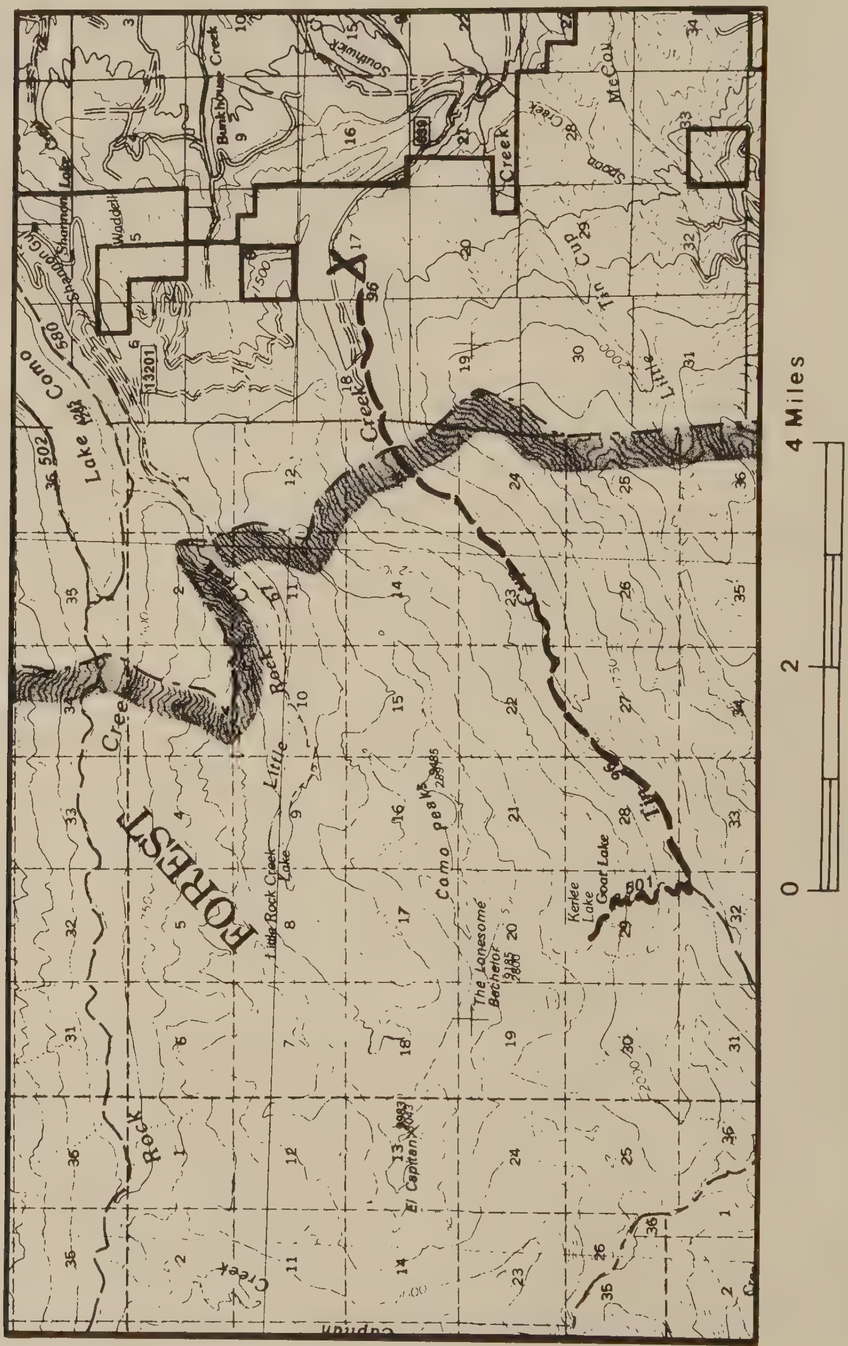
General description: A steep, overnight hike to a subalpine lake on the southern flanks of the Como Peaks.
General location: 7 miles west of Hamilton in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.
Maps: Como Peaks and El Capitan USGS Quads, and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Map.
Special attractions: The high peaks of the southern Bitterroot Range.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 1,500 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Darby Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 712 Highway 93 South, Darby, MT 59829, or call (406) 821-3913.

The hike: The jagged peaks of this portion of the Bitterroots are the highest mountains in the entire range, which stretches more than three hundred miles along Montana's western border. This hike will take you in to see some of the more interesting peaks of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, such as El Capitan, the Lonesome Bachelor, and the Como Peaks.

The trailhead is off Forest Road #639, which leaves U.S. Highway 93 just south and west of Darby at Tin Cup Road. The road is signed at a left hand turn, which crosses to the south side of Tin Cup Creek just before the trailhead.

The trail winds its way through dense timber in the lower reaches of the canyon, crossing Tin Cup Creek twice. These crossings can be tricky early in the summer and after heavy rains, so it's best to wait and attempt this trek after the middle of July.

HIKE 24 *KERLEE LAKE*



Como Lake
Shannon Lake
Waddell
Bunkhouse Creek
Southwick
Spoon Creek
McCoy
Tin Cup Creek
Little Tin Cup
Little Rock Creek Lake
Little Rock Creek
Rock Creek
Como peak
The Lonesome Bachelor
El Capitan
Kerlee Lake
Goat Lake
FOREST
4 Miles
2
0

Some 5.7 miles from the trailhead and just before reaching the Kerlee drainage, look for a small trail leading down to a boulder slab to Tin Cup Creek. Head upstream a couple of hundred feet to a wet crossing and then bushwack up until hitting the Kerlee Trail on the north side of the main drainage.

Both Goat and Kerlee lakes offer a choice of campsites, but Kerlee has the edge on scenery, with views of the high, rocky peaks to the north of the lake. If you're exhausted by the climb to the lake basin, you can lounge around and fish. If you're ambitious, you can attempt to scramble to the summit of massive El Capitan, two miles to the northwest. Climb the hillsides to the northwest of Kerlee Lake, making sure to stay low enough to avoid the vertical rock walls on the southern slopes of the Lonesome Bachelor.

After reaching a low pass between the Bachelor and El Capitan, cautiously follow the eastern ridge to the windswept summit, 9,983 feet high. Here are stupendous views of the Como Peaks, the Lonesome Bachelor, and the lakes in Little Rock Creek far below. To the west lie the forested ridges of the vast Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and the canyons centered around the wild Selway River. To the south is a sawtoothed ridge with granite towers separating the valley of Tin Cup Creek from the North Fork of Trapper Creek. Few views of the Bitterroots are better than those from the summit of El Capitan.

Technical rock climbers will find the many faces of El Capitan, the Bachelor, and Como Peaks to have challenging routes. If you're not trained in rock climbing, you should steer clear of the more difficult mountains in the area and limit yourself to the east edge of El Capitan.

This trip makes a superb three-day or longer introduction to the high country of the Selway-Bitteroot.—*Don Reed*

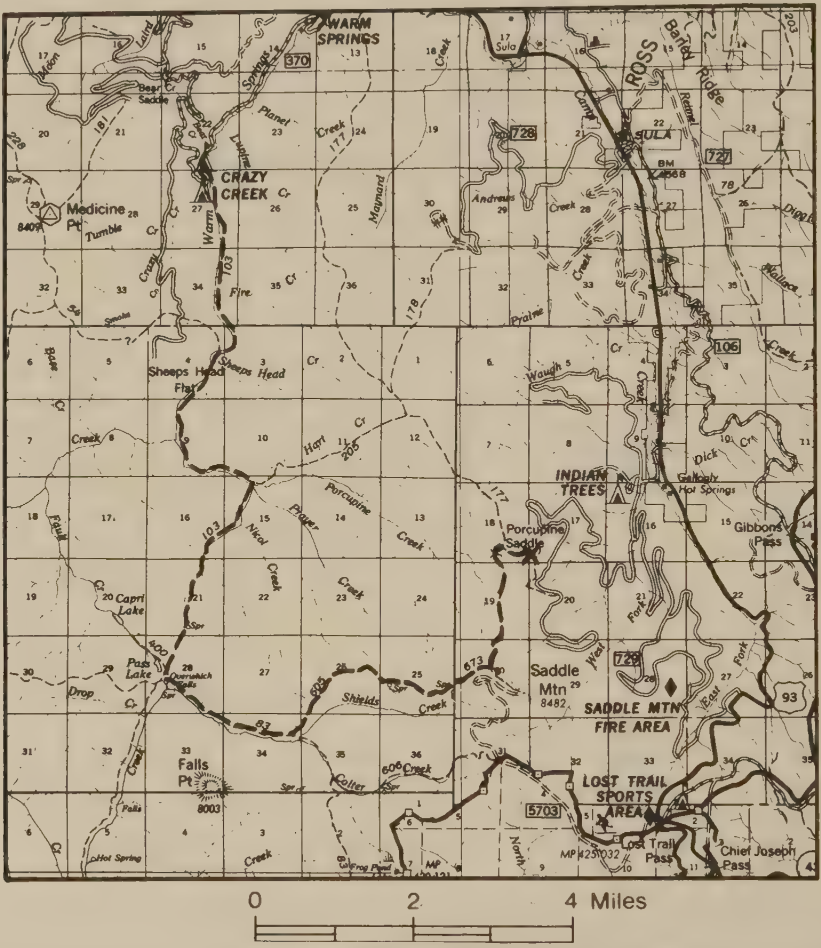
HIKE 25 OVERWHICH FALLS

General description: A moderate, 2-day backpack.
General location: 8 miles southwest of Sula, or about 80 miles south of Missoula.
Maps: Medicine Hot Springs and Piquett Mountains USGS Quads, and Bitterroot National Forest Map, Sula Ranger District.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation loss: 3,000 feet.
Season: June through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Sula Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 7338 Highway 93 South, Sula, MT 59871, or call (406) 821-3201.

The hike: Drive south of Missoula on U.S. Highway 93 to the Indian Trees Campground, about four miles south of the Sula Ranger Station. As you enter the campground area, turn left onto Forest Road #729 and follow it approximately three-fourths of a mile to the junction with Forest Road #8112. Take FR #8112 to the spur road signed Porcupine Saddle Trail, and follow it to the trailhead parking lot. Roads may be bumpy.

Leave a vehicle or have somebody pick you up at the Crazy Creek Campground, twenty-two miles north by road. To find this campground, drive 4.8

HIKE 25 *OVERWHICH FALLS*



miles north of Sula on US 93 to Warm Springs Road #370. Turn southwest at the Moosehead Museum and follow FR #370 for 4.5 miles to Crazy Creek Campground.

From the trailhead, take Porcupine Saddle Trail #196 and turn left at its junction with the Warm Springs Ridge Trail #177; follow #177 to Shield Creek Trail #673. Trail #673 merges with Coulter Creek Trail #83 and goes downstream to Overwhich Falls. Then, turn north on Trail #103 and stay on it all the way to Crazy Creek Campground. There are several trail junctions along the way, so keep your map handy. Most junctions are well marked.

All of these trails are generally well-maintained. Although not abundant, drinking water is usually available, but caution should be taken because *Giardia* may be present. Trail #605 has two good springs, and Trail #83 follows Shields Creek. Trail #103 follows streams most of the way, but since the lower portions are grazed by domestic cattle, you should be sure to treat water before drinking.

Since there isn't a steep climb—as is the case with most long hikes—the Overwhich Falls trip is suitable for all hikers. Most hikers are interested in a leisurely hike and take at least two days, but ambitious hikers could hike this in one day.

All three trails are open to motorcycle use, and cattle graze the Warm Springs area during summer months. With these exceptions, the signs of civilization are rare. The highlight of the trip is, of course, two-hundred-foot Overwhich Falls, which can be viewed from the trail. For a closer look, drop your pack and bushwack a short way to the creek below the falls.

Just past the falls, you can take a short side trip up Trail #400 to Pass and Capri lakes. Although both lakes have a few cutthroat, fishing is considered marginal, as it is in the streams along the way—with the possible exception of Warm Springs Creek, which can be good. The area is noted for its large, productive huckleberry patches, so consider substituting berry-picking for fishing.

The hike has several good campsites—at Pass and Capri lakes and on the trail between them, and at Three Forks and Sheepshead Flat. All have plenty of firewood. The campsite at Overwhich Falls doesn't have readily available water, but the other sites do.—*Wayne Avants*

HIKE 26 *BLUE JOINT*

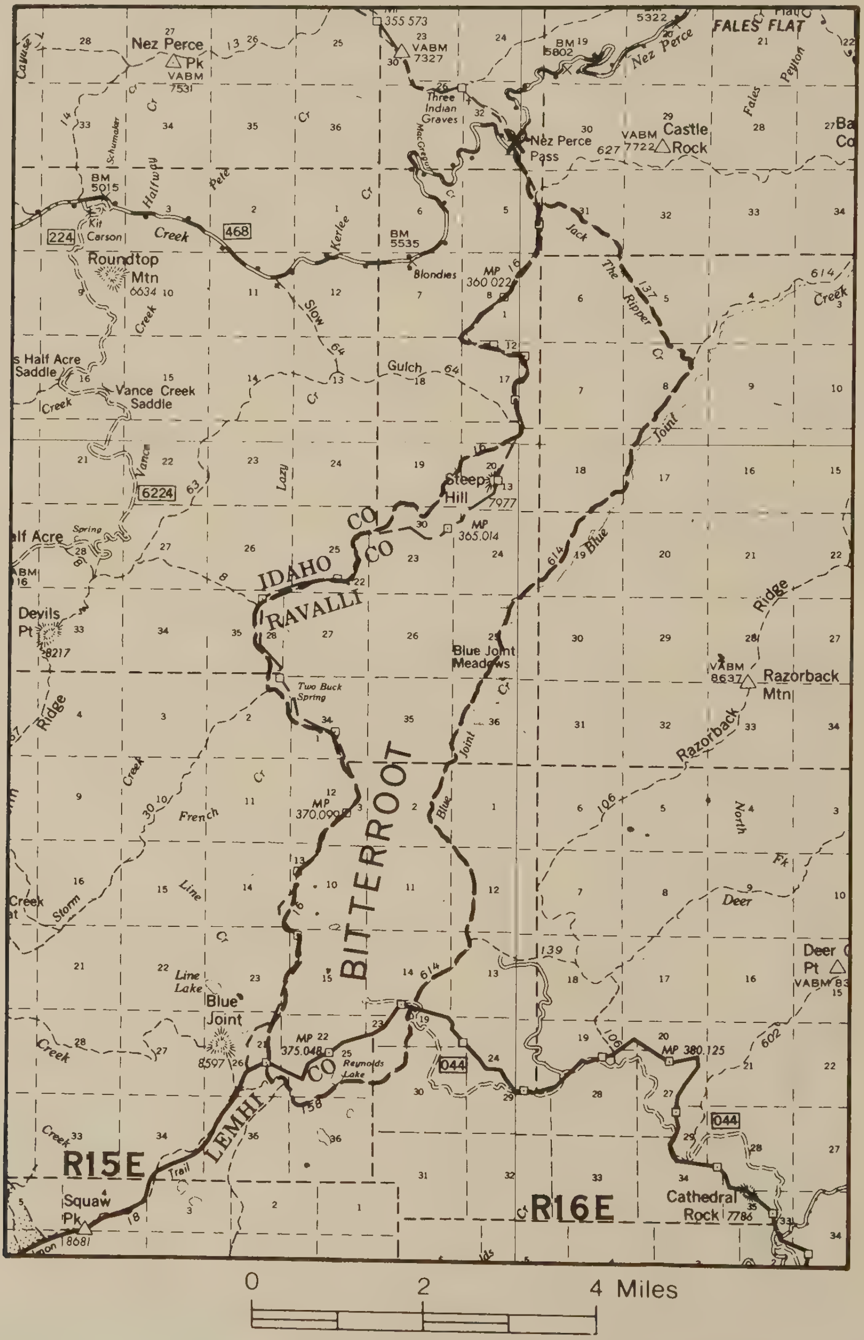
General description: A 4-day backpack.
General location: 35 miles southwest of Hamilton on the Idaho-Montana border.
Maps: Painted Rocks Lake NW, Painted Rocks Lake SW, and Nezperce Peak USGS Quads; and the Bitterroot National Forest Map. Also useful is the Forest Service's River of No Return Wilderness Map.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,400 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,400 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, West Fork Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, Darby, MT 59829, or call (406) 821-3269.

The hike: Getting to the Blue Joint area involves a long drive for most hikers, but it's well worth it, especially if you like long backpacking trips into wild country seldom visited by hikers.

To find the trailhead, drive south from Darby on U.S. Highway 93 for about five miles. Just before you cross the Bitterroot River, turn right up the West Fork of the Bitteroot Road #473. There's a sign for the Trapper Creek Job Corps Center and West Fork Ranger Station at this junction, along with the Peaks & Pines Trailer Court.

Drive up this road for about thirteen miles until you see the Forest Service's West Fork Ranger Station. Go past the ranger station, and after only half a mile turn right onto the Nezperce Road and drive about sixteen miles to Nezperce Pass. At the pass, turn left and park in the parking lot where the trail starts.

This is a twenty-nine-mile loop starting and ending at this trailhead. It can


Nez Perce Pk
VABM 7531
355 573
VABM 7327
FALES FLAT
Nez Perce
Fales
Peyton
BM 5802
5322
Three Indian Graves
MacGregor Cr
Nez Perce Pass
VABM 7722
Castle Rock
Cayuse
Schumaker
Halfway Cr
Pete
BM 5015
Kit Carson
224
Creek
468
Kerlee
BM 5535
Blondies
MP 360 022
Roundtop Mtn
6634
Creek
Slow
64
Gulch
Jack The Ripper Cr
137
614
Creek
Half Acre Saddle
Vance Creek Saddle
Creek
Vance
6224
63
Lazy Cr
Joint
Steep Hill
7977
MP 365.014
Blue
Half Acre
Spring
IDAHO CO
RAVALLI CO
Devils Pt
8217
Ridge
Blue Joint Meadows
Cr
VABM 8637
Razorback Mtn
Razorback
Ridge
Two Buck Spring
Creek
French
Cr
MP 370.099
BITTERROOT
Joint
Blue
106
North Fk
Deer
Line
Storm
Creek
Line Lake
Blue Joint
8597
MP 375.048
Reynolds Lake
CO
LEMHI
044
139
MP 380.125
602
Deer Pt
VABM
Creek
R15E
Trail
158
Squaw Pk
8681
R16E
Cathedral Rock
7786
0
2
4 Miles

be taken in either direction, but it's easier to take the stateline trail first and then come back to the trailhead by hiking down Blue Joint Creek.

The trail continues on a ridge top all the way to Reynolds Lake—about thirteen miles. Be careful not to get onto the Castle Rock Trail, which meets the stateline trail about a quarter mile from the trailhead. The trail down Jack the Ripper Creek takes off to the left about a mile from the trailhead. This is the trail that will bring you back to your vehicle in three days.

Except for Two Buck Springs, about seven miles from the trailhead, there's no drinking water until you reach Reynolds Lake. So carry full water bottles and fill them again at Two Buck Springs, a good place to spend the first night.

All along this trail, the view of the Selway River country in Idaho is spectacular. This is subalpine country, featuring whitebark pine and lots of standing snags. Firewood is scarce. Be sure to bring your backpacking stove.

The second day's hike is also along a ridge top, with scenic vistas on each side. It's about six miles to Reynolds Lake, a good second campsite. Don't miss the trail junction just before Reynolds Lake. It occurs in a small, grassy valley with water. Take the lefthand trail to the lake. Reynolds Lake has fishing for cutthroat to add to the evening's entertainment.

About two miles after leaving Reynolds Lake, you reach the junction with the Blue Joint Creek Trail. A primitive road leads to this trail junction, and it's possible to have a vehicle left here to make this a point-to-point hike. However, it would be a loss to miss Blue Joint Creek. The trail down this drainage is twelve miles long and well-maintained, and there's plenty of drinking water. The trail winds through a wide valley with grassy meadows and a meandering Blue Joint Creek. The stream has good fishing for small cutthroat.

Blue Joint Meadows (six miles from Reynolds Lake) is especially beautiful and a wise choice for your third campsite. This leaves eight miles for the last day.

The trail up Jack the Ripper Creek takes off about five miles from Blue Joint Meadows. Watch carefully for this junction. It juts off to the left just after a creek crossing. It's easy to see, but there is no sign.

The trail gradually climbs along troutless Jack the Ripper Creek for about three miles through small but gorgeous meadows. The last half a mile is fairly steep as you approach the ridge line.

Then, retrace your footsteps from three days hence for about one mile to the trailhead and your waiting vehicle, leaving some of Montana's most spectacular, yet gentle, backcountry behind you.

Although you won't see grizzly bears along this hike, black bears are fairly common. Be careful with your food and keep a clean camp. The area also has most other wildlife associated with western Montana, including mountain lions, mountain goats, elk, deer, and moose. Mosquitoes usually aren't a big problem after June. You'll want to wait until at least July anyway to let the snow melt.

The 61,400-acre Blue Joint Wilderness Study Area is actually a portion of the immense River of No Return Wilderness country which extends across the Idaho border into Montana. The 2.2-million-acre River of No Return is the largest designated wilderness in the lower forty-eight states, and Blue Joint would make a fine addition to this spectacular area.

On the way home, your enthusiasm for the grandeur of this area might be dampened by the fact that it might not be the same for the next generation. There is still intense pressure to develop the minimal timber resource in the Blue Joint Wilderness Study Area instead of setting it aside. Check with the Bitteroot National Forest for a progress report on this controversy.—*Bob Oset*

Reservation Divide, Rattlesnake Wilderness

Overview

The Reservation Divide includes the roadless areas dividing Lolo National Forest and The Flathead Indian Reservation. The ridge is part of a sedimentary belt forming, the northeast slope of Ninemile Valley along the Ninemile fault. Most of the area is rarely used and quite wild. Although, Squaw Peak is climbed frequently by Missoula residents and University of Montana students.

East across busy U.S. Highway 93 and just north of Missoula is the Rattlesnake Wilderness. Established in 1980, the area has many recreation opportunities. It is heavily used by Missoulians, but most don't travel too far in. Parts of the Rattlesnake National Recreation area are used for mountain biking, but most of the trails in the wilderness area are closed to bikes. Hikers and horsemen have traveled to the upper Rattlesnake for centuries.

The Rattlesnake valley was gouged by an ancient glacier, leaving a terminal moraine near the main trailhead. The mountains surrounding it at one time may have been part of the Bitterroot Range. From the summits of peaks in the Rattlesnake, views of the Missions to the north and the Missoula valley to the south are breathtaking.

HIKE 27 *THREE LAKES PEAK*

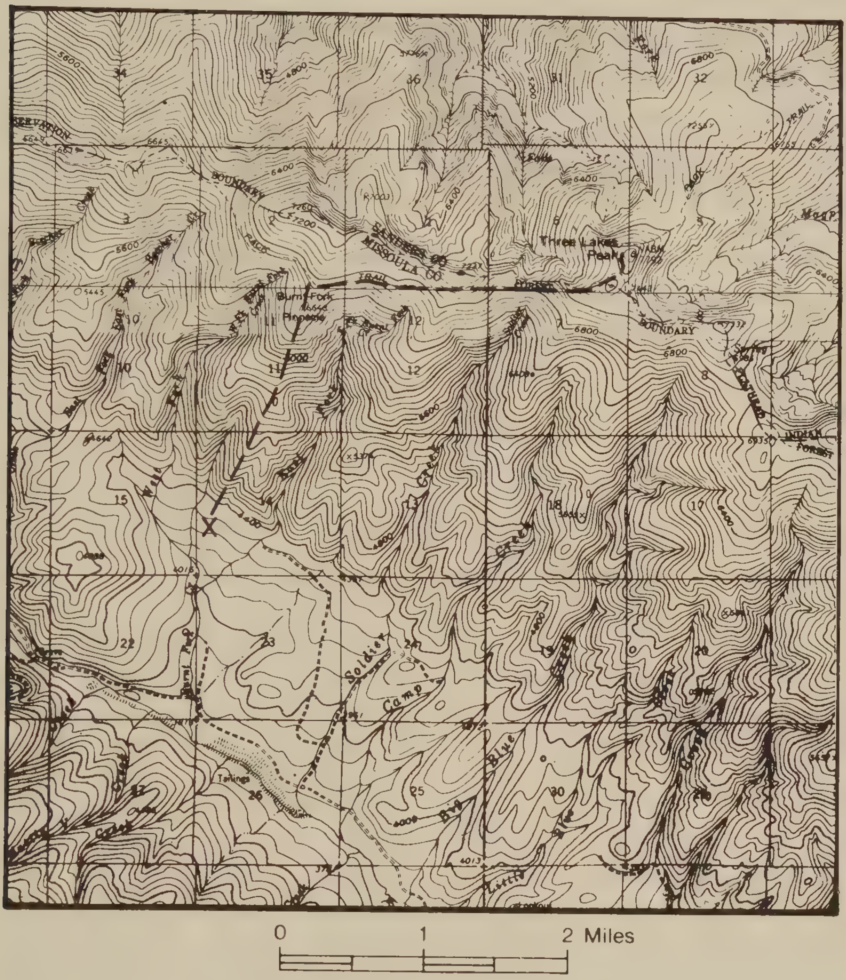
General description: A fairly demanding 1-day climb.
General location: 35 miles northwest of Missoula on the Reservation Divide.
Maps: Perma and Tarkio USGS Quads, and Lolo National Forest Recreation Map. (Note: The Quad maps are somewhat outdated and do not show the road to the trailhead. Recent Lolo National Forest Travel Plan maps show the trail clearly.)
Special attractions: A pleasant hike along a subalpine ridge, with great views of much of western Montana.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,400 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Ninemile Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, 20325 Remount Road, Huson, MT 59846, or call (406) 626-5201.

The hike: Squaw Peak, the highest peak on Reservation Divide and a well-known landmark for Missoula residents, is easily and frequently climbed. Three Lakes Peak, a dozen miles northwest of Squaw, provides a slightly more demanding, but more interesting, hike.

The Reservation Divide consists of 16,000 acres of roadless backcountry located along the divide between the Lolo National Forest and the Flathead Indian Reservation. The National Forest land adjacent to the roadless area is managed for a variety of uses, including timber management.

To find the trailhead, take Interstate 90 west from Missoula to the Ninemile

HIKE 27 *THREE LAKES PEAK*



Three Lakes Peak
Burnt Fork Pinnacle
RESERVATION
BOUNDARY
SANDERS CO
MISSOULA CO
TRAIL
Soldier
Camp
Blue
Little
0
1
2 Miles

exit; follow the county road north to the Ninemile Ranger Station. Turn left at the ranger station and follow the road that heads up the Ninemile Valley. Go thirteen miles before crossing a cattle guard and entering the Lolo National Forest. One mile after entering the national forest, the road forks. Take the right fork onto Foothills Road #5498 and head north toward the Reservation Divide. Follow this road for five miles to the trailhead.

The trailhead to Three Lakes Peak is marked as Burnt Fork Pinnacle Trail #418. The trailhead is located at the west end of a clearcut on the north side of the road. The trail begins as a winding logging road skirting the edge of the clearcut. The logging road soon becomes a trail and climbs up to the Reservation Divide by way of the Burnt Fork Pinnacle, the former site of a lookout tower. Some stretches of trail between the trailhead and Burnt Fork Pinnacle show signs of erosion from abuse by riders of trail bikes.

Soon after Burnt Fork Pinnacle, the trail intersects the Reservation Divide pack trail. Turn right (east) onto this trail. Here, the trail is usually above timberline and offers excellent views of the Ninemile Valley, Ninemile Divide, and the higher portion of the Great Burn proposed wilderness area on the Montana/Idaho border to the southwest.

Continue east for 2.5 miles until directly below the south summit of Three Lakes Peak. Scramble up the talus slope to the south summit, and then on to the higher summit at 7,792 feet.

From the summit of Three Lakes Peak you can see the Cabinet Mountains to the northwest, the National Bison Range and Flathead Lake to the north, the Mission Mountains to the east, and the Bitterroots to the south. Below the summit to the east is a picturesque glacial cirque with, appropriately, three lakes. To the east along the Reservation Divide is conical-shaped Squaw Peak.

The ten-mile round-trip to the peak and back takes a full day. And it's dry, so take plenty of water. Wait until late June for the snow to melt.

There are a number of enjoyable hikes along the Reservation Divide. The Three Lakes Peak hike is a good introduction to an area that is rarely used and quite wild.—*John Westenberg*

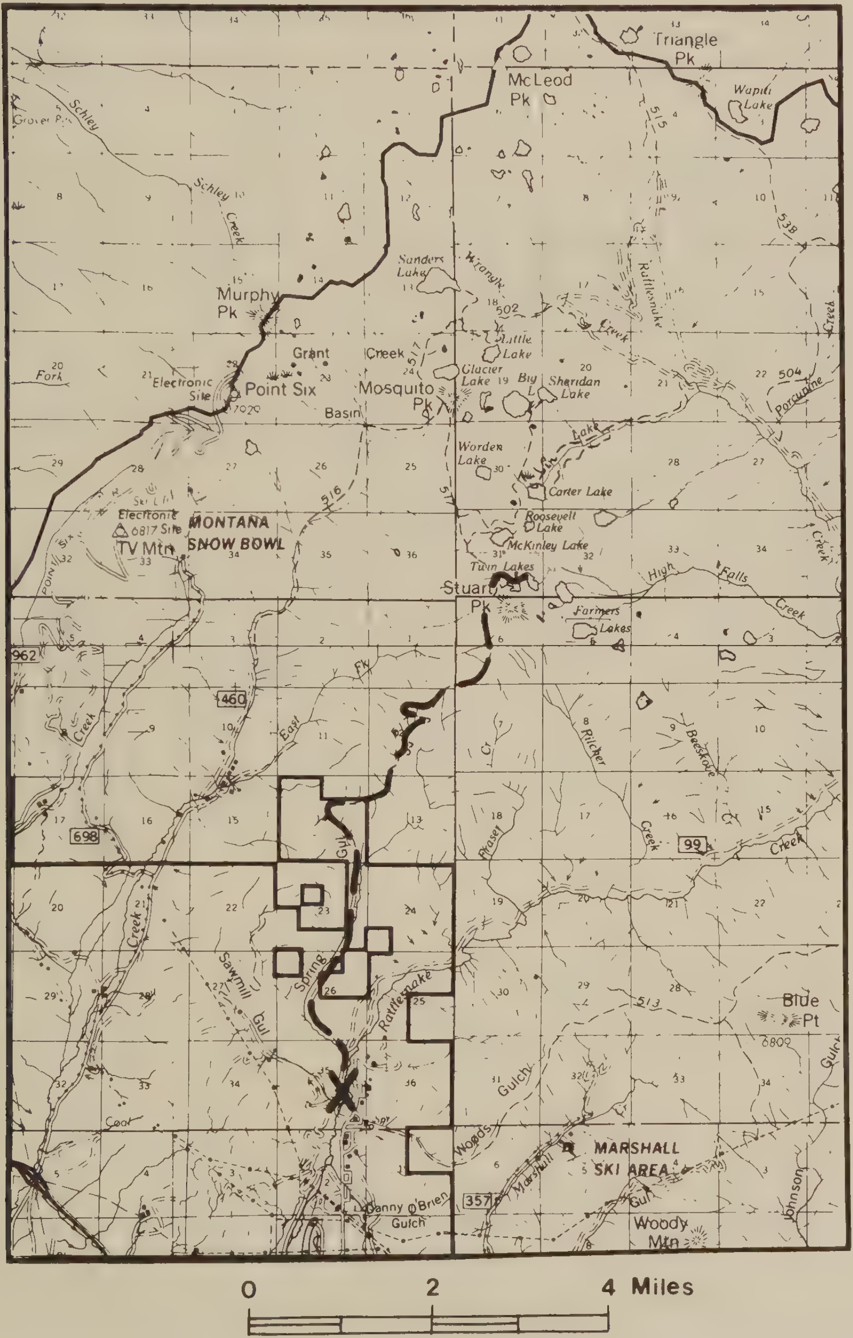
HIKE 28 *STUART PEAK, TWIN LAKES*

General description: A 2- or 3-day backpack for hardy hikers.
General location: In the Rattlesnake Wilderness, Missoula's municipal watershed, just north of Missoula.
Maps: Northeast Missoula and Stuart Peak USGS Quads, and the Rattlesnake NRA Map.
Special attractions: Vistas of at least four major mountain ranges from the summit of Stuart Peak.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 4,100 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Missoula Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Building 24-A, Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59801, or call (406) 329-3814.

The hike: Probably no other city has such a spectacular, yet accessible, wild area virtually within its limits as does Missoula, with its Rattlesnake Wilderness. This hike will take you into some of the alpine lake country around Stuart Peak.

Drive north on Van Buren Street from the Van Buren-Interstate 90 interchange, bearing to the right until you find yourself on Rattlesnake Drive. Turn left onto the unmarked road just beyond Wildcat Road, four miles from the interchange. The parking area and entrance to the Upper Rattlesnake Area are located at the mouth of Sawmill Gulch, just a few yards beyond the bridge. The parking lot has a handicapped accessible toilet, bulletin board, and map. The map at the gate provides an overview of the entire drainage.

HIKE 28 *STUART PEAK, TWIN LAKES*


Triangle Pk
McLeod Pk
Wapiti Lake
Schley
Grover P.
Schley Creek
Sanders Lake
Wrangle
Rattlesnake
Creek
Murphy Pk
Grant
Creek
Mosquito Pk
Little Lake
Glacier Lake
Big Lake
Sheridan Lake
Fork
Electronic Site
Point Six
7020
Basin
Worden Lake
Lake
Carter Lake
Porcupine
Ski Lift
Electronic 6817 Site
TV Mtn
MONTANA SNOW BOWL
Roosevelt Lake
McKinley Lake
Twin Lakes
Stuart Pk
Farmers Lakes
High Falls Creek
Creek
Point Six
962
460
698
99
East Fk
Creek
Ritcher Creek
Beeskove Creek
Fraser
Gulch
Spring Gul
Sawmill Gul
Rattlesnake
Coal
Blue Pt
6809
Gulch
Woods
Gulch
MARSHALL SKI AREA
Marshall Gul
357
Danny O'Brien Gulch
Woody Mtn
Johnson
502
517
516
515
538
504
513
0
2
4 Miles

The Missoula Valley from Stuart Peak, deep in the Rattlesnake Wilderness. Joseph A. Mussulman photo.

The hike along Trail #517 is popular with beginning backpackers, possibly because it appears from the map that Stuart Peak and the enticing lakes to the north are but a short distance from the gate. Also, it seems as though one would be comfortingly close to civilization throughout the trip. (Indeed, from time to time en route one is within sight—and sometimes even sound—of Missoula.) However, the sign at the entrance to Spring Gulch, less than half a mile north of the gate, reads "Stuart Peak, 9.5 mi., 7 hrs.," a tip-off that the hike actually is somewhat challenging. And a quality of wildness pervades the atmosphere.

The first three miles up the bottom of Spring Gulch are quite easy regardless of whether you follow the old cow paths to the west of the creek or the farm lane to the east. Both routes lead past the sites of homesteads established a century or more ago, though all that remain are traces of foundations and hearths, a few persistent lilac bushes and apple trees, and two alien Lombardy poplars.

From the head of Spring Gulch, Trail #517 begins winding relentlessly upward, 6.5 miles to Stuart Peak. There is usually water at the 5,800-foot level, but no more until you reach Twin Lakes, which lie in the cirque just north of 7,960-foot Stuart Peak.

The Twin Lakes are barren, but Cliff and Peterson lakes, accessible by poor trails to the southeast, contain fish.

If you've got the time and energy, you might prefer to proceed northward along the ridge to the Lake Creek drainage, whose principle lakes (McKinley, Worden, Carter, Big, and Sheridan) also provide some fishing.

If you're primarily out for exercise and scenery (or for huckleberries in season) you might want to pitch camp one evening at the upper end of Spring Gulch, spend the following day walking to Stuart Peak and back, and pack out on the morning of the third day. There are half a dozen pleasant campsites along the creek on the fringes of Kench Meadow.

Much of the Rattlesnake high country remains untrailed or served by only the faintest tracks. Despite the Rattlesnake's popularity, secluded, almost undiscovered basins and lakes dot its far reaches. There are those who make a habit of exploring these untrailed areas, and they report that they frequently travel several days without encountering other hikers.

Proximity to Missoula results in high use of much of the area. This—plus the fragile nature of the high country itself and the area's status as Missoula's municipal watershed—demands that you take every precaution to leave no trace of your visit. Evidence of high country campsites is proliferating. Make every effort to pass lightly over this fragile terrain. Camp well back from the lakes, and don't add to the blight of fire rings.

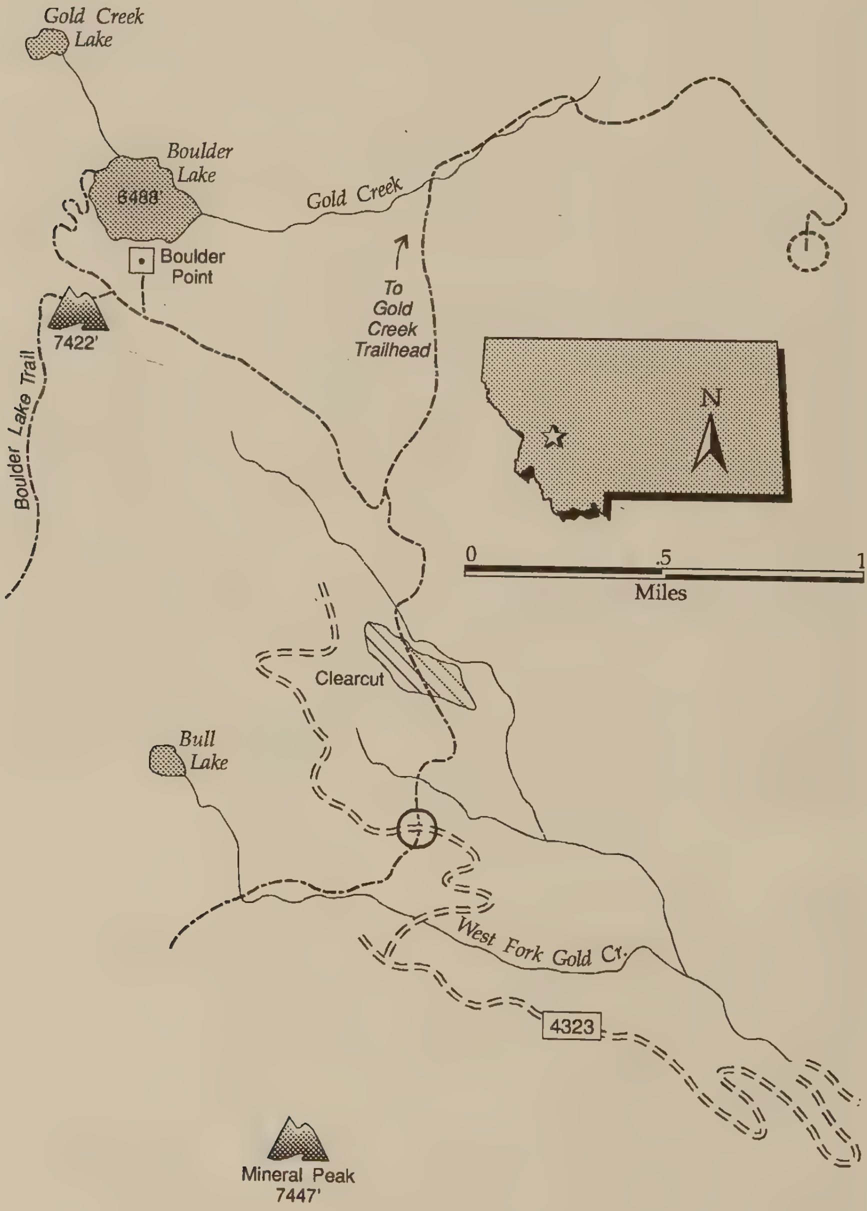
Spectacular scenery and access from a large metropolitan area make the Rattlesnake a unique area. In 1980, after a long public debate, the Rattlesnake became Montana's newest wilderness area. Hopefully, wilderness designation will protect this area for years to come.—*Joseph A. Mussulman and Bill Brown*

HIKE 29 *BOULDER LAKE*

General description: A popular 5-mile overnight hike for Missoula area residents.
General location: In the upper Rattlesnake Wilderness north of Missoula.
Maps: Rattlesnake National Recreation Area and Wilderness Map.
Special attractions: A scenic hike to a high mountain lake away from the heavily used lower Rattlesnake.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,440 ft.
Elevation loss: 712 ft.
Season: Mid-June through September.
Information: District Ranger, Missoula Ranger district, Lolo National Forest, Building 24-A, Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59801, or call (406) 329-3750.

The hike: In October of 1980, Congress established the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area to provide a place where water, wilderness, recreational, wildlife, and educational values are preserved. Boulder Lake offers all.

HIKE 29 *BOULDER LAKE*


Gold Creek Lake
Boulder Lake
6488'
Gold Creek
Boulder Point
7422'
Boulder Lake Trail
To Gold Creek Trailhead
N
0
.5
1
Miles
Clearcut
Bull Lake
West Fork Gold Cr.
4323
Mineral Peak 7447'

Drive north of Bonner (east of Missoula) on Montana Highway 200 along the Blackfoot River. Turn left onto Gold Creek Road for six miles. This is private land so be careful of logging trucks. Then turn left for Boulder Lake Trailhead on Forest Road #2103. Follow road FR #2103 for a few miles before Forest Road #4323 climbs switchbacks. Several logging roads branch off FR #4323. The main road continues up the left side of the valley until dropping to the valley floor and ascending the right side to the trailhead

During the eleven miles from Gold Creek Road to the trailhead, notice the different timber harvest methods on the surrounding hills. The rectangular areas with no trees are "clear-cuts," a practice most naturalists do not like. Similar areas with a few trees left standing are "seed-cuts." Other areas where only a fraction of the trees were removed are "selective-cuts." There are no facilities at the trailhead. Be careful not to block the road when you park.

The trail heads north for 2.5 miles on relatively flat terrain with two creek crossings. Watch for trail markers and cairns while crossing the clear-cut. The trail follows a logging road for just one hundred yards before turning right. A cairn marks the turnoff. At the intersection with Boulder Lake Trail and the trail to Gold Creek, take a sharp left. At the intersection, there is a small creek. Filtering water at this point is a good idea. After turning west, climb gradually for 2.5 miles until descending switchbacks to Boulder Lake.

Before descending to the lake, a trail veers right to Boulder Point. An old fire lookout is still standing at the top. This panoramic view of the lake and Mission Mountains north is well worth the short walk to the point. Boulder Lake is the largest lake with fish in the Gold Creek area, but is fished often. *—Russ Schneider*

The Sapphire Mountains

Overview

The Sapphire Mountains are predominantly sedimentary rock, stretching from Missoula south to the Anaconda Range. They form the east boundary of the Bitterroot valley. Unlike the abrupt Bitterroot Range across the valley to the west, the Sapphires rise gradually from the rolling hills.

The Sapphire Range includes everything from elk winter range to mountain goat habitat. The Sapphires include the Burnt Fork Game Range, which supports a large heard of elk. Traditionally, hunting has been the main recreation here, but hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and camping are increasingly popular. The streams and lakes support cutthroat and brook trout. While the east slope watershed provides quality irrigation for Bitterroot farmers and clear streams for Bitterroot fisheries.

Many hikers drive past the Sapphires focused on the Bitterroots, but hiking is just as rewarding across the valley. Areas of the Sapphires have been included in past wilderness legislation. The Stoney Mountain area is in the latest.

HIKE 30 *MOUNT SENTINEL*

General description: A pleasant 1.75-mile day hike up Missoula's most prominent mountain.
General location: East of the University of Montana campus on Campus Drive in Missoula.
Maps: Southeast Missoula USGS Quad or Trails Missoula map.
Special attractions: The "M" and views of Missoula and surrounding valleys.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,958 ft.
Season: March through November
Information: District Ranger, Missoula Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Building 24-A, Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59801, or call (406) 329-3750 Also, UM Outdoor Program, Harry Adams Fieldhouse 201, Missoula, MT, 59812 or call (406) 243-5172.

The hike: The "M" on the west face of Mount Sentinel has been a Missoula landmark since 1908 when the Forestry Club members forged a zigzag trail up the mountain, and students carried up stones to shape the symbol of the University of Montana. The current concrete "M," built in 1968, replaced earlier ones. A hike to the "M" is a favorite destination for people of all ages.

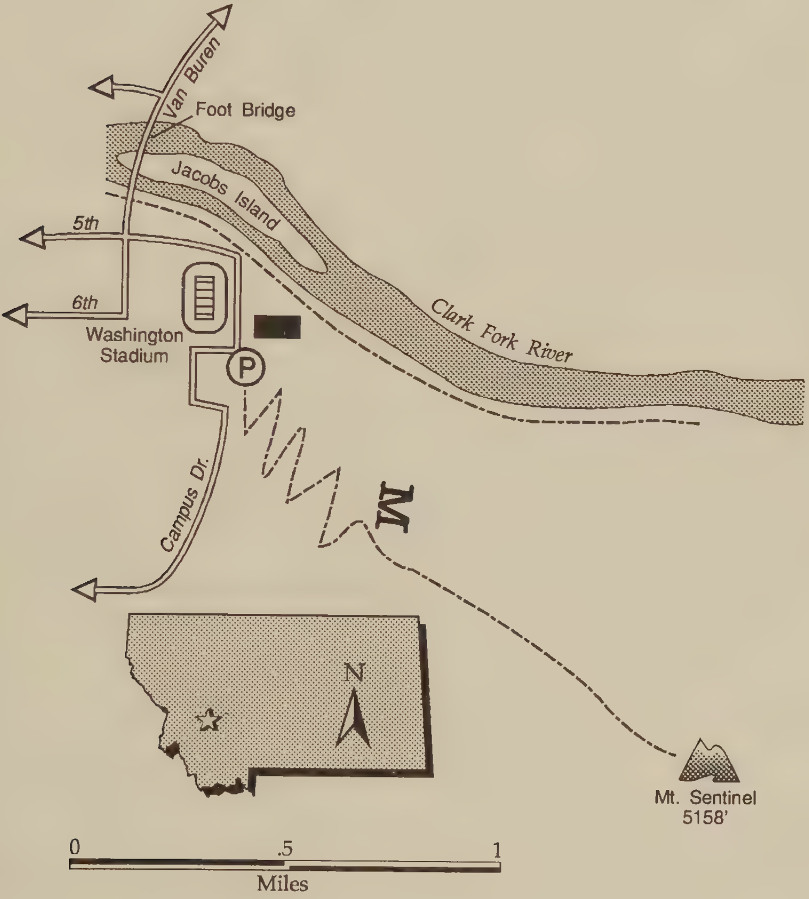
To reach the trailhead, drive south on Van Buren Street from the Van Buren-Interstate 90 interchange, turn right (east) on Broadway and left across the Madison Street Bridge. Across the bridge, the road forks; veer left onto Arthur. At the stoplight, turn left on 6th and head straight for the fieldhouse. Follow the one-way street past the fieldhouse to Campus Drive. Turn right and go around Washington Grizzly Stadium. The trailhead is on the left behind the campus security building. Free parking is available at the trailhead. But be careful not to park without paying at any of the other campus parking lots, because a ticket is likely.

The trail begins through a gate from the parking area. While the trail is only 0.75 miles long, the hike can be quite strenuous, depending on how quickly you cover this distance. Climb a steep zigzag path with eleven switchbacks and gain 620 feet in elevation. Local athletes and the UM Cross Country Team run the "M" trail as a regular part of their training.

Many people only climb to the "M" and return, but another mile of climbing to the top of Mount Sentinel is worth the trip. Remember to carry water, because none is available on the hike. Veer up and to the right upon reaching the "M." Beyond the "M," an old road continues up the ridge to the top. Mule deer frequent the mountain face, especially in the early morning and late evening. Even if you miss the deer, the view from Mount Sentinel is superb. Look to the north across Hellgate Canyon to see Mount Jumbo and the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area and Wilderness. In the "Five Rivers Valley" below lies Missoula, one of the fastest growing cities in Montana.

From the top of Mount Sentinel, you can retrace your steps to the base of the mountain. *—Russ Schneider*

HIKE 30 *MOUNT SENTINEL*


Van Buren
Foot Bridge
Jacobs Island
5th
6th
Washington Stadium
P
Clark Fork River
Campus Dr.
M
N
Mt. Sentinel 5158'
0
.5
1
Miles

HIKE 31 *STONEY LAKE, DOME SHAPED MOUNTAIN*

General description: An overnighter for families with the option—for hikers in good condition—of climbing Dome Shaped Mountain.
General location: 25 miles northeast of Hamilton in the Sapphire Mountains.
Maps: Mount Emerine, Burnt Fork Lakes, Skalkaho Pass, and Stoney Creek USGS Quads; and Deerlodge National Forest Map.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,483 feet.
Elevation loss: 740 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Philipsburg Ranger District, Deerlodge National Forest, P.O. Box H, Philipsburg, MT 59858, or call (406) 859-3211.

The hike: Part of the enjoyment of hiking in the Sapphires is the feeling that you've discovered an area that most hikers would ordinarily drive past without a second glance. The Sapphires (once they've got your attention) prove that there is more to the "wilderness experience" than craggy peaks and snowfields.

Stoney Lake is one place where this point is well made. To find it, take U.S. Highway 93 south from Missoula to its junction with the Skalkaho Road #38, three miles south of Hamilton. Turn east (left) onto this winding mountain road, and drive past Skalkaho Falls and over Skalkaho Pass. About two miles over the pass is Crystal Creek Campground. Parking is limited.

You'll see Crystal Creek on the right and a clearcut on the left. Across from the campground, the trail begins as a primitive road for 0.5 miles. The road changes into a hiking trail (#10), but it continues to follow Crystal Creek for three miles to its beginning at the Sapphire Divide—also called the Bitterroot Divide or Rock Creek Divide on some Forest Service signs.

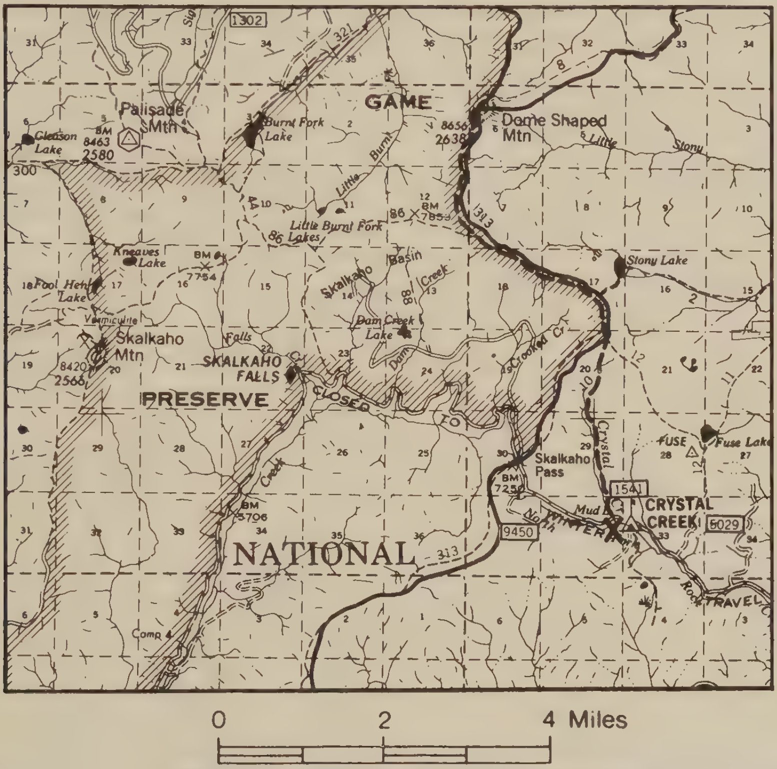
The trail goes steadily, but gradually, uphill, much of the time through meadows. Upon reaching the divide, the trail heads north for a little over a mile before the trail down to Stoney Lake splits off to the right.

Stoney Lake offers average fishing for cutthroat, a good campsite with firewood near its outlet, and a chance of seeing mountain goats on the cliffs across the lake from camp.

If you have an extra day or are a strong hiker, it's possible to return to the divide trail (#313) and follow it north for approximately four miles to Dome Shaped Mountain, which has a broad, grassy summit, crisscrossed with snowdrifts that may linger well into July. Also of interest are the thickets of whitebark pine on the summit ridge. The trail to Dome-Shaped Mountain is lightly used and difficult to follow.

With the Burnt Fork Game Preserve on your left (west), you stand a good chance of seeing deer and elk. Although the Sapphires don't appear to be typical mountain goat country, they are home for a surprisingly large population, particularly around Dome Shaped Mountain. The occasional open spots along the divide provide views of the Pintlers (southeast), the Flint Creek Range (northeast), the Bitterroots (west), and to the south across Skalkaho Pass, the higher peaks of the proposed Sapphire Wilderness.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 31 *STONEY LAKE, DOME SHAPED MOUNTAIN*


GAME
PRESERVE
NATIONAL
Palisade Mtn
BM 8463 2580
Gleason Lake
Burnt Fork Lake
Little Burnt Fork Lakes
Dome Shaped Mtn
8656 2638
Stony Lake
Little Stony
Kneaves Lake
Fool Hen Lake
Vermiculite
Skalkaho Mtn
8420 2568
SKALKAHO FALLS
Falls
Skalkaho Basin
Dam Creek Lake
Crooked Cr
CLOSED TO
Skalkaho Pass
BM 7250
Crystal
FUSE
Fuse Lake
CRYSTAL CREEK
Mud
North Fork
WINTER
ROCK TRAVEL
1302
321
313
1541
5029
9450
BM 5706
0
2
4 Miles

HIKE 32 *HOPE AND FAITH LAKES*

General description: A 3-day trip for ambitious hikers who want to explore the Sapphire Mountains.
General location: 30 miles southeast of Hamilton.
Maps: Lick Creek, Whetstone Ridge, Kent Peak, and Jennings Creek Camp USGS Quads; and Bitterroot National Forest Map.
Special attractions: Solitude, wildlife, and an introduction to a little-known mountain range.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,300 feet.
Elevation loss: 2,920 feet.
Season: June through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Sula Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 7338 Highway 93 South, Sula, MT 59871, or call (406) 821-3201.

The hike: Compared to the rugged Bitterroot Mountains just across the Bitterroot Valley, the Sapphire Mountains look like low, rolling hills. However, they offer first-rate wilderness recreation. This hike will take you into the center of the largest remaining roadless area in the Sapphires.

Although most maps still show Hope and Faith lakes as Legend and Spud lakes, respectively, the names have been officially changed.

To reach the trailhead from Missoula, take U.S. Highway 93 south for eighty-two miles to Sula. Then take the road up the East Fork of the Bitterroot for about twenty miles to its junction with the Moose Creek Road just beyond the East Fork Ranger Station. Take the Moose Creek Road north until it ends five miles later at the trailhead.

For the first three miles, the trail (#168) borders Moose Creek, going up its narrow, talus-filled canyon. The trail then turns east and climbs up the ridge between Moose Creek and Cuba Creek. This one-mile climb marks the beginning of a dry section, so stock up with water before climbing out of the Moose Creek valley.

The trail then heads north along the ridge for 3.5 miles until intersecting with an abandoned jeep road. Although not as pleasant as a trail, the road is gradually going to seed, with little sign of vehicle use. Turn west (left) and follow the abandoned road for approximately three miles, passing Shadow Lake (no fish) and several meadows on the right.

After entering a particularly beautiful meadow, you'll come upon a second fork in the trail. The right fork takes you into country you'll probably want to investigate tomorrow. However, by this time you'll probably be more interested in the left fork, leading to Hope and Faith lakes (only one mile farther) and your campsite along Trail #39. A final fork in the trail comes just beyond this point, with the right fork climbing the ridge above the lakes and the easily missed left fork leading directly to the lakes.

Missing this fork and finding yourself on top of the ridge is no cause for regret. You can explore the ridge, looking down on the lakes, south and east to the Pintlers and west to the Bitterroots. In the foreground to the west are the scars of the huge Sleeping Child Fire of 1953. The easiest place to scramble back down to the trail leading to the lakes is at the north end of the ridge.

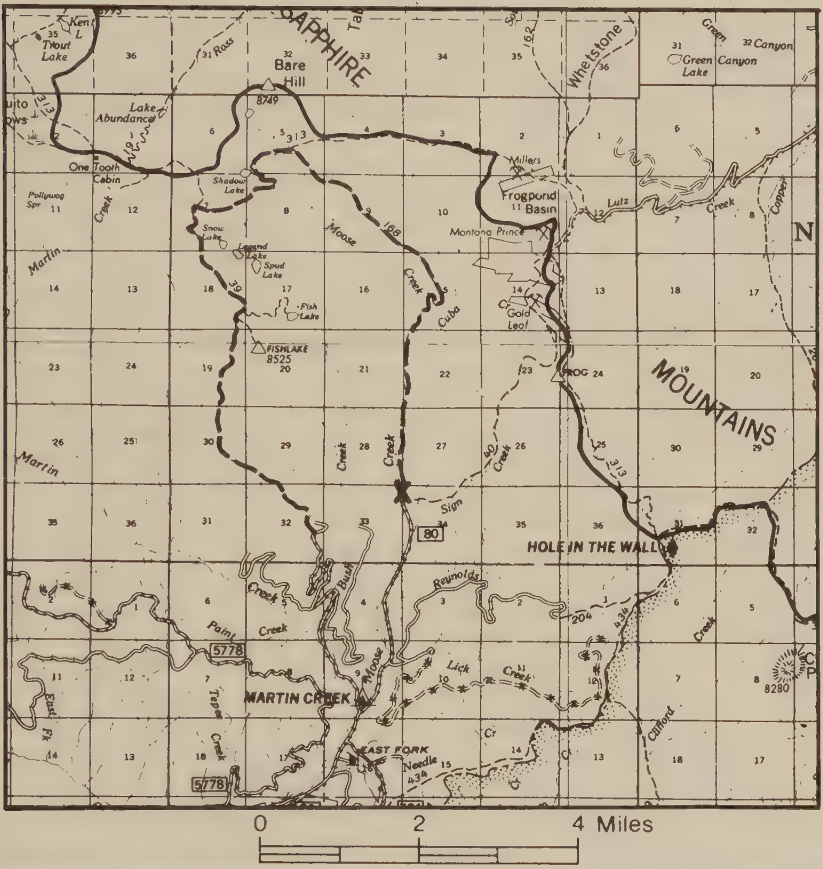
After passing fishless Charity Lake (formerly Snow Lake), you'll come to Hope and Faith lakes. Although both are small lakes, they contain pan-sized cutthroat trout. They're also good vantage points for seeing mountain goats. This is heavily timbered country, so there's no shortage of firewood.

If you have a second night at the lakes, you can spend the next day exploring the country to the north. Climb 9,000-foot Kent Peak, exploring the meadows and watching for deer, elk, and goats en route; or drop down into the upper Rock Creek drainage to Lake Abundance, a rarely visited lake with good cutthroat fishing.

There are two possible variations for the return trip. If you're taking two cars, leave one at the Fish Lake trailhead at the end of Forest Road #726, which runs north through the Martin Creek Recreation Area. This road begins at the Martin Creek Campground at the East Fork/Moose Creek Junction. This way you can return to the ridge above the lakes and follow the trail seven miles along the ridge and down to the waiting car.

If you have one car, you can return by dropping directly down to Moose Creek from the lakes. This means cross-country hiking and carefully descending some steep slopes while clinging to underbrush—definitely not for novice hikers or families. Once down in the Moose Creek bottom, follow

HIKE 32 *HOPE AND FAITH LAKES*


SAPPHIRE
MOUNTAINS
Bare Hill
8749
Kent L
Trout Lake
Lake Abundance
One Tooth Cabin
Pollywog Spr
Martin Creek
Ross
Shadow Lake
Snow Lake
Legend Lake
Spud Lake
Fish Lake
FISHLAKE 8525
Moose Creek
Cuba
Millers
Frogpond Basin
Montana Prince
Gold Leaf
FROG
Whetstone
Green Lake
Green Canyon
Canyon
Lutz Creek
Copper
HOLE IN THE WALL
Sign
80
Reynolds
Bush
Paint Creek
5778
MARTIN CREEK
Tepee Creek
East Fk
Lick Creek
EAST FORK
Needle
Clifford
8280
313
168
39
204
434
162
N
0
2
4 Miles

the game trails paralleling Moose Creek for approximately three miles until you intercept the trail you came in on as it crosses Moose Creek. This option will give you an excellent chance of seeing elk or moose and also will take you through beautiful groves of huge Engelmann spruce.

The third return-trip option, of course, is retracing your steps back to your vehicle.

Much of this area was included in the Montana Wilderness Bill, which was vetoed in 1988. For the time being, Trail #39 is open to mechanized bikes and ATV's. Management for this area may change in the near future. You may wish to contact the District Ranger at Sula for further information.—*John Westenberg*

HIKE 33 *WELCOME CREEK*

General description: A moderate round-trip suitable for a day hike or overnighter.
General location: 25 miles southeast of Missoula in the Sapphire Mountains.
Maps: Cleveland Mountain and Ravenna USGS Quads, and the Lolo National Forest Map.
Special attraction: A very accessible, pleasant hike in one of Montana's smallest wilderness areas, the Welcome Creek Wilderness.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,000 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Missoula Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Building 24-A, Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59801, or call (406) 329-3814.

The hike: Besides offering scenic, timbered hiking trails, the Welcome Creek Wilderness has a rich history. Mined extensively around the turn of the century, the area has many haunting reminders, now abandoned and decaying into the landscape, to greet you.

The trail starts thirteen miles up well-known Rock Creek east of Missoula. Drive east from Missoula for twenty-five miles on Interstate 90 and turn right (south) at the Rock Creek exit. Go up the gravel Rock Creek Road for thirteen miles and watch for a sign on your right (west) marking the Welcome Creek trailhead.

After leaving your car, you cross Rock Creek on a suspension bridge. Then veer right, following the creek downstream for half a mile before turning west until you feel like camping or turning around and returning to your vehicle. The trail continues some five miles to the low summit of Cleveland Mountain.

This valley is steep and narrow. It has a mystery and loneliness of its own, as you walk by old mining sites and see how the forest is gradually reclaiming them.

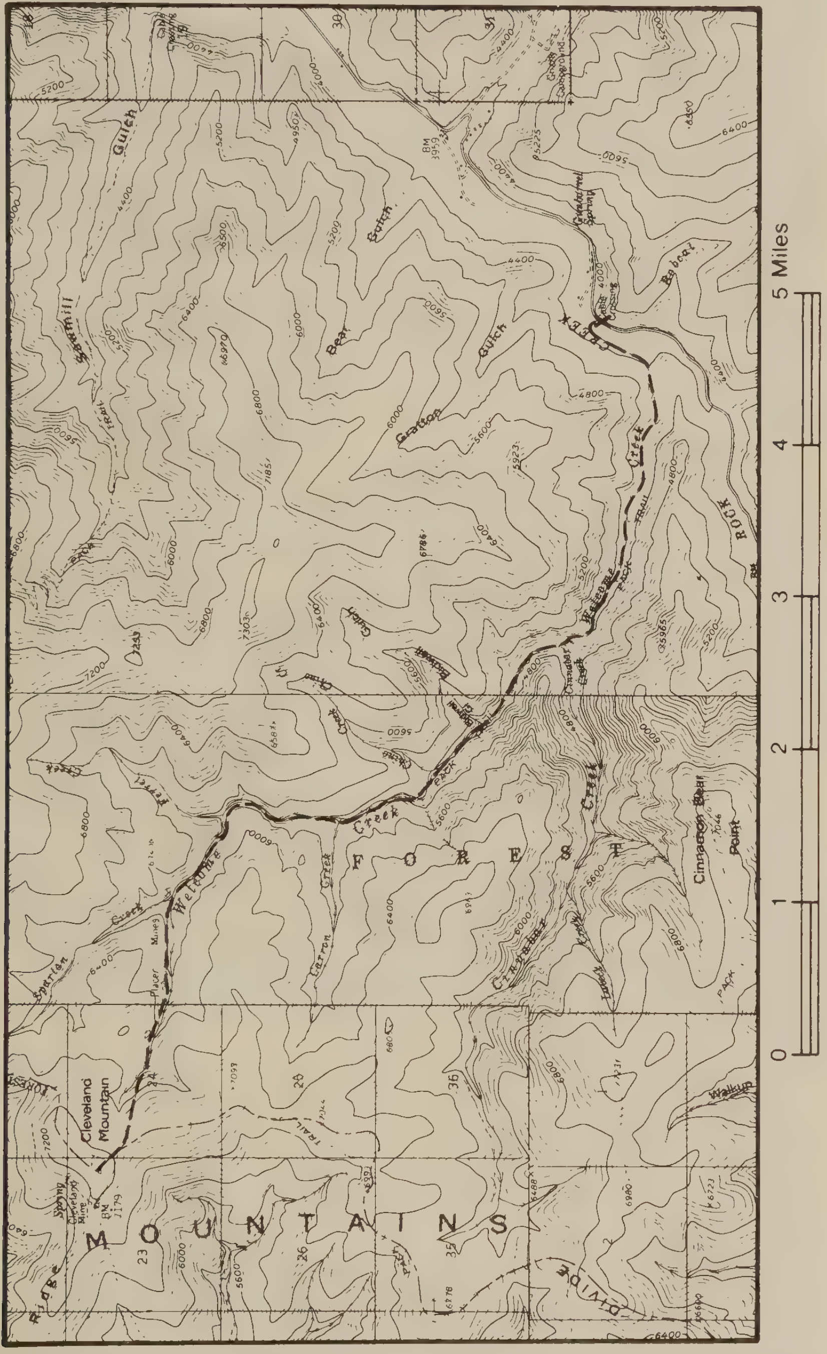
This is a wet area, so wait until July for hiking. If you go earlier, expect a boggy trail and mosquitoes out in force. However, drinking water poses no problem, as water is everywhere.

Although Welcome Creek has small brookies, the fishing there takes a back seat to famous Rock Creek running past the trailhead.

If you're camping, perhaps the best are where Cinnabar and Carron creeks join Welcome Creek. Both sites have old mining ruins to explore after supper.

Although some protesters claimed Welcome Creek has too many signs of civilization to qualify for wilderness, the reverse is true. Man's hold on the area has long faded into history. Now, the ghosts of old timers (such as outlaw Frank Brady who was shot in 1904 in Welcome Creek) only enrich the wilderness experience. The area also provides an excellent example of how quickly nature heals the wounds of past carelessness.—*Don Berg*

HIKE 33 *WELCOME CREEK*



Gulch
Sawmill
Bear
Gulch
Gratton
Gulch
Welcome
Creek
Bobcat
Cinnabar Creek
Cinnamon Bear Point
Carron Creek
Cleveland Mountain
Sparten
Placer Mines
Welcome Creek
F O R E S T
M O U N T A I N S
Ridge
Walkup
ROCK
TRAIL
PACK
Cleveland Mine
Spring
Cable Crossing
Grantsdale
Campground
BM 3959
5 Miles
4
3
2
1
0

The flush of a blue grouse can rudely jolt hikers from their daydreams. Harry Engels photo.

Flint Creek Range, Anaconda Vicinity

Overview

This area includes both the Flint Creek Range west of Deer Lodge and the Anaconda Range north of the Big Hole River. The Anaconda Range is protected as the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. Central areas of the Flint Creek Range are proposed for wilderness designations.

The precipitous summits of the Anaconda Range gradually give way to open parks and meadows bordered by stands of aspen, spruce, and lodgepole in the North Big Hole proposed wilderness. Meandering streams are loaded with rainbow, cutthroat, and brook trout. Rich habitat for moose, deer, and mountain lion surrounds the stream bottoms. The roadless heart of the rugged Flint Creek Range is west of Deer Lodge, in the upper Clark Fork River watershed.

The Flints rise more than a mile above the Clark Fork River, with Mount Powell hitting 10,300 feet. Twenty-five alpine lakes provide popular backcountry destinations in the high reaches of the Flints, with excellent wildlife habitat below.

HIKE 34 *RAINBOW LAKE*

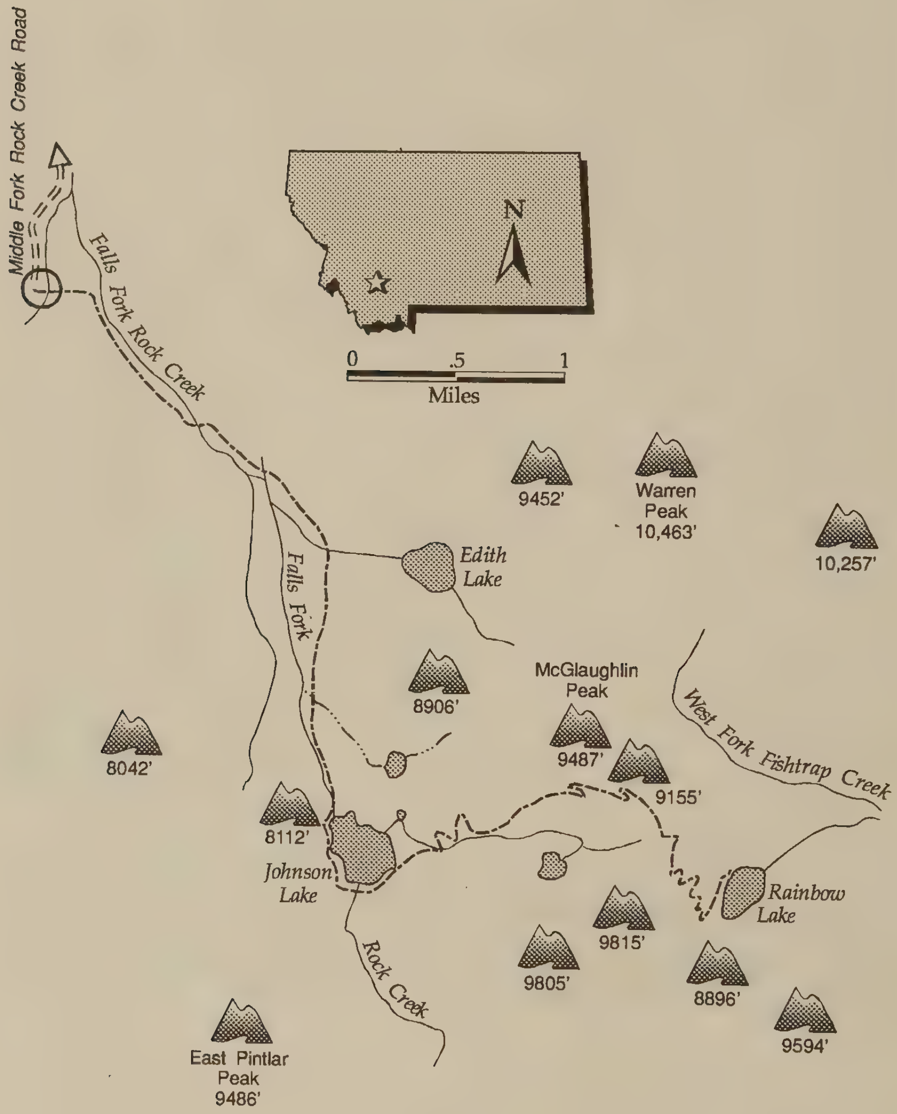
General description: An ideal hike for campers willing to undertake a difficult round-trip to a high lake in the heart of the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.
General location: 30 miles southwest of Anaconda.
Maps: Warren Peak USGS Quad and the Deerlodge National Forest Map.
Special attractions: A secluded wilderness lake ringed with spectacular scenery.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,675 feet.
Elevation loss: 785 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Philipsburg Ranger District, Deerlodge National Forest, P.O. Box H, Philipsburg, MT 59858, or call (406) 859-3211.

The hike: Ever want to set up camp in a secluded alpine clearing away from the mainstream of wilderness traffic, where a diversity of peaks surround a small, deep lake loaded with trout? There are many of these secret spots in Montana, but those who find them usually keep them secret, which is a selfish way to handle any blessing. Rainbow Lake is one of these blessings. Promise not to tell?

To find the trailhead, take Montana Highway 1 south of Philipsburg for six miles to Montana Highway 38. Turn west on MT 38 for nine miles to Middle Fork Road #5106. Then take the Middle Fork Road and follow it south until it ends seventeen miles later. Here, take Falls Fork Trail #29.

It's a 4.5-mile uphill grind to Johnson Lake (elevation 7,720 feet). Hike along

HIKE 34 *RAINBOW LAKE*


Middle Fork Rock Creek Road
Falls Fork Rock Creek
Falls Fork
0 .5 1
Miles
N
9452'
Warren Peak 10,463'
10,257'
Edith Lake
8906'
McGlaughlin Peak
9487'
9155'
West Fork Fishtrap Creek
8042'
8112'
Johnson Lake
Rainbow Lake
9815'
9805'
8896'
9594'
Rock Creek
East Pintlar Peak 9486'

the west shore of this lake to a trail junction at the south end, and take the left-hand fork to the east to Continental Divide Trail #9. Turn left and climb a 2.5-mile stretch with moderate switchbacks to 9,040-foot Rainbow Pass.

The snow usually clings to this high land until at least late June, so mid-July or later is best for this hike. There is plenty of water along the trail except for the stretch between Johnson and Rainbow lakes.

Rainbow Pass is a great place to relax and enjoy the surroundings. To the east is the ominous, broad pyramid of 10,793-foot West Goat Peak, highest in the Pintler Range. To the south are slopes covered with rare alpine larch. And right below you is your destination—Rainbow Lake. You can see the trail twisting down to the 8,215-foot elevation lake.

The outlet is the best spot to camp. The rainbow trout are especially active in the morning and evening. Dead trees provide plentiful firewood. Trails to explore and peaks to climb are in all directions.

The geology of this area is striking. The range is made up mainly of typical Montana sedimentary rock, but with granitic intrusions, which account for all the odd-looking granite boulders strewn about in unexpected places. This phenomenon is especially evident on the trail to Warren Lake.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 35 *TRASK LAKES*

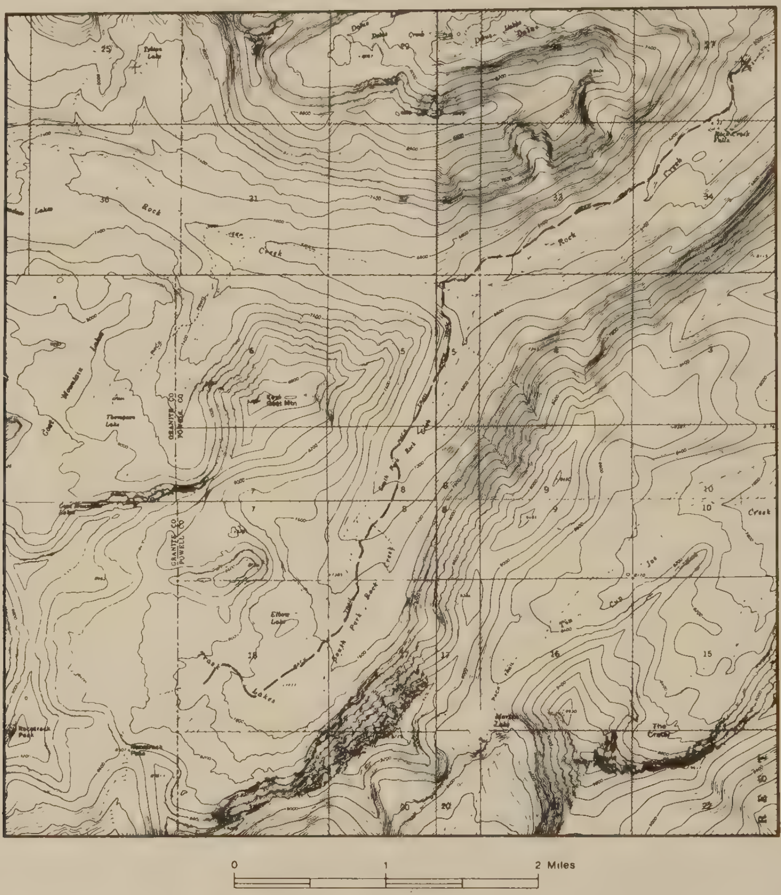
General description: A moderate overnighter, or a 3-day hike for the most enjoyment.
General location: About 12 miles west of Deer Lodge in the Flint Creek Range.
Maps: Rock Creek Lake, Pike's Peak, and Pozega Lakes USGS Quads; and the Deerlodge National Forest Map.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,900 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Deer Lodge Ranger District, Deerlodge National Forest, 91 N. Frontage Road, Deer Lodge, MT 59722, or call (406) 846-1770.

The hike: Although this area lies close to Butte, Deer Lodge, and Helena, it remains relatively unknown. Yet, without doubt, the Flint Creek Range is among the most scenic in the state. Unfortunately, much of this beautiful range has been sliced by roads. The parts that haven't are included in the 40,300-acre proposed Flint Creek Range Wilderness.

To find the trailhead, go down the main street of Deer Lodge and turn west at the corner with the bank. Follow this road for two miles until it splits. The left-hand fork goes to the prison farm. Take the right fork (which actually goes straight ahead), and follow it ten more miles to Rock Creek Lake. Park at the upper end of the lake on the side of the county road. Do not block traffic.

From this area, follow the road through the Daphne Lode patented mining claims past several residences. The route is an old jeep road that is not maintained for public use. Approximately three-quarters of a mile up this road at Rock Creek Falls is the closure area boundary. No motorized vehicles are

HIKE 35 *TRASK LAKES*


Rock
Creek
Thompson Lake
Mountain
GRANITE CO
POWELL CO
Elbow Lake
Trask
Lakes
South Fork Rock Creek
Trail
Rock Creek
Joe
Creek
0
1
2 Miles

allowed beyond this point except for snowmobiles on snow (also closed October 15-December 1). From this point, the jeep road is maintained as Rock Creek Trail #53.

At the three-mile mark, watch for a trail junction. The road continues on, but you must turn left, crossing Rock Creek and then following the South Fork of Rock Creek to the lakes. Trask Lakes Trail #63 continues climbing gradually for four miles to Lower Trask Lake, one of four lakes (plus several potholes) in this small but gorgeous cirque. Once you're off the jeep road, the signs of civilization fall behind and the hike becomes more of a quality backcountry experience.

Trask Lakes, at 7,800 feet, offer excellent fishing for small brookies. In fact, fish are so abundant and hungry that even the youngest angler can expect a good catch. (The fishing is also good in the main Rock Creek along the jeep road in the first three miles of the hike.)

The good fishing and moderate, fourteen-mile round-trip (1,900-foot elevation gain) make Trask Lakes perfect for family backpacking. But don't forget the insect repellent, or your kids won't want to leave the tent. Drinking water is available all along the trail.

The basin has many suitable campsites. However, firewood is scarce, so use your stove and avoid fires. Also, help carry out garbage left by thoughtless visitors.

After you're bored with hauling in fish, you might try an interesting side trip to Racetrack Peak. Stay on the trail for three miles past the lakes until it climbs to the top of 8,507-foot Racetrack Pass. Then turn right (west) and make a one-mile scramble to the summit of 9,524-foot Racetrack Peak for an outstanding view of the entire area.

The entire Trask Lake Trail is currently being improved. From its junction with Rock Creek Trail #53, new bridges and several puncheon walkways have already been constructed. Several new puncheon walkways across muddy areas on Trail #53 and construction of a short trail from the Trask Lake basin over to Elbow Lake have been completed.

Under the Deer Lodge National Forest Plan, this area will be managed for its primitive/or semi-primitive recreational values on trail oriented non-motorized use.—*Frank Culver*

West Big Hole, Italian Peaks

Overview

The snowy Beaverhead Mountains reach nearly 11,000 feet, towering above a series of rugged glacial cirques and trough-shaped canyons on the sunset side of the fabled Big Hole River Valley. The West Big Hole is excellent elk habitat, providing secure calving areas, as well as summer and fall range. Winter range is on the Idaho side. The dozen willow-lined streams in the Beaverhead Mountains are loaded with trout. The water from mountain snowpack is the life-blood of the Big Hole River fishery.

Farther southeast along the Montana-Idaho border are the Italian Peaks near the Lima Peaks and Garfield Mountain. Here the Continental Divide twists upward from high parks and aspen groves to knife-blade limestone ridges. Isolated and spectacular, this area has long been considered for wilderness designation. Elk, mule deer, black bear, and antelope habitat is especially important in the roadless reaches of Lake Gulch, Deadman, Sheep, and Sawmill Creeks.

HIKE 36 *PIONEER AND HIGH-UP LAKES*

General description: A fairly strenuous overnight round-trip (well-suited for a three-day trip) to a small lake just below the Montana-Idaho border.

General location: On the east slope of the Continental Divide in the Beaverhead National Forest, fifteen miles southwest of Jackson and sixty-five miles west of Dillon.

Johnson Lake in the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. Forest Service photo.

Maps: Goldstone Mountain USGS Quad and Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan.
Special attractions: A remote high-mountain lake way off the beaten path.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,400 feet.
Elevation loss: 400 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Wisdom Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, Box 238, Wisdom, MT 59761, or call (406) 689-3243.

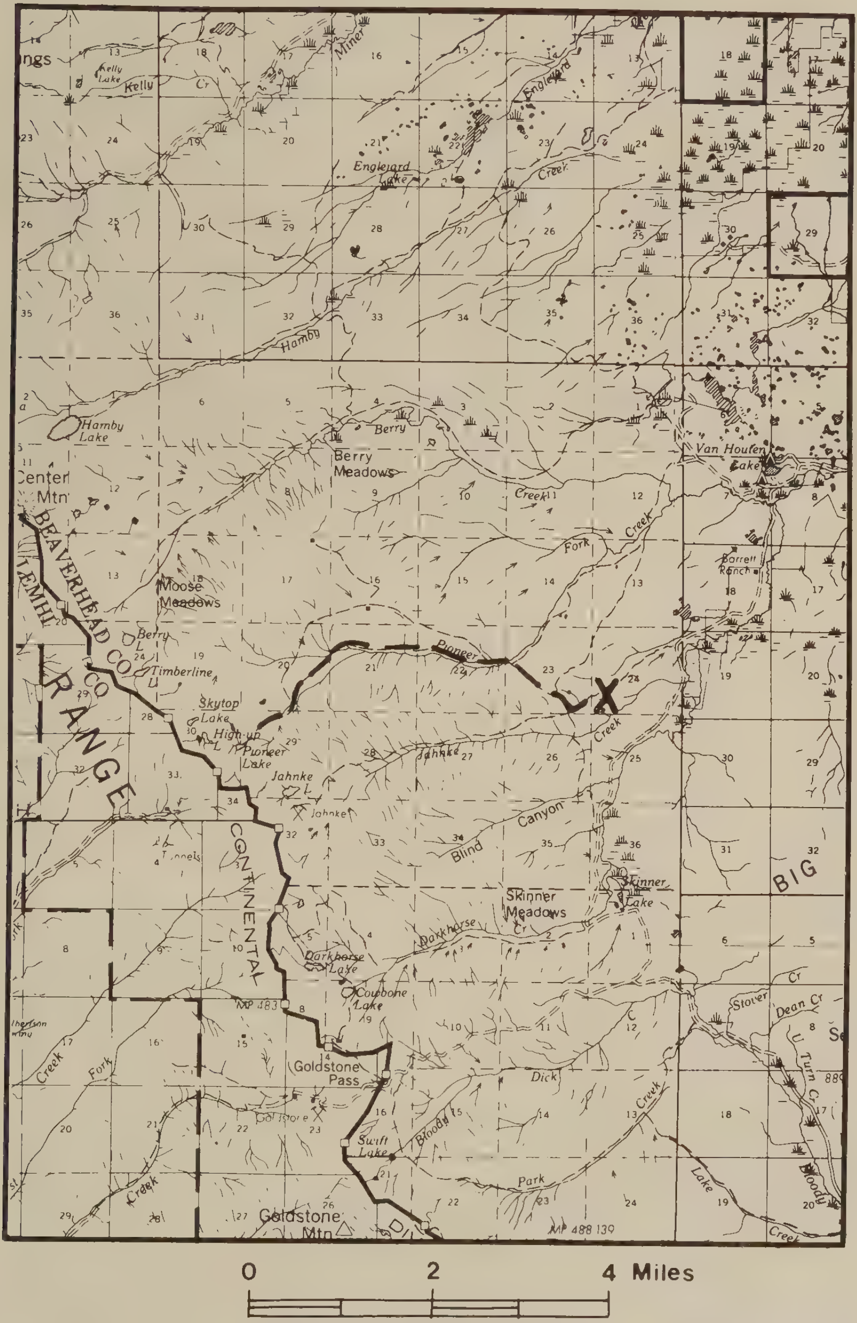
The hike: To get to the trailhead, drive one mile south of Jackson on Montana Highway 278 and turn right onto a gravel road near the top of a hill. Follow this road south and west to Van Houten Lake Campground, crossing many of the upper tributaries of the Big Hole River on narrow bridges. At the South Van Houten Campground, continue straight ahead for approximately 1.5 miles along Bloody Dick Road to the Jahnke Creek trailhead.

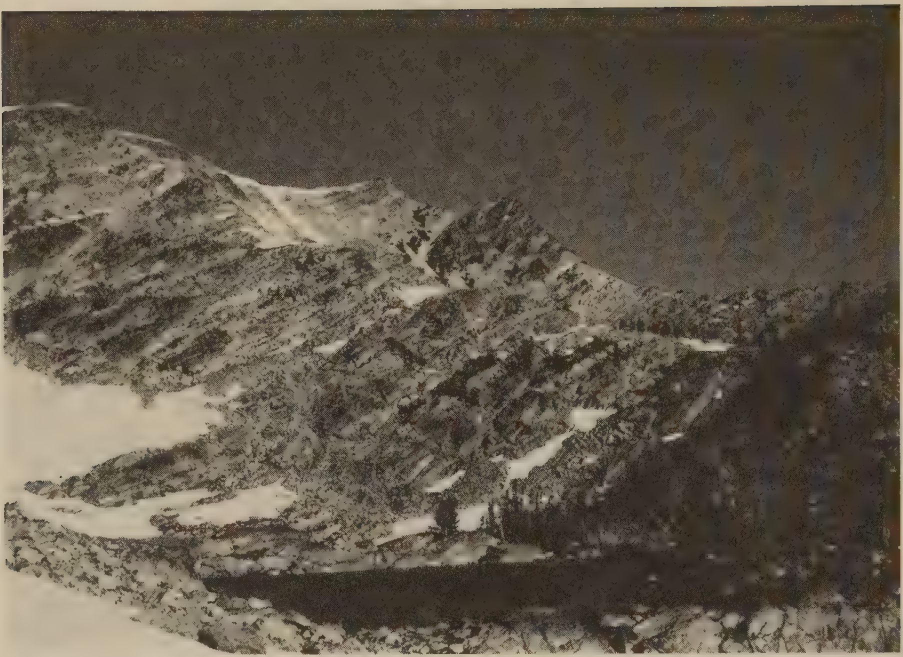
Two-wheel-drive vehicles with adequate clearance can go up the Jahnke Creek Trail for about half a mile to its intersection with Overland Trail #36. At this point, you should park your vehicle and continue on foot. The Overland Trail goes downhill and joins Pioneer Creek Trail just before the creek crossing.

The track crosses Pioneer Creek on the remains of a primitive bridge. Some four-wheelers have avoided the bridge, leaving deep ruts along the soft streambanks.

Shortly after this crossing is the junction with Trail #442, which continues along the south side of Pioneer Creek as a primitive vehicle track. It's pleasant

HIKE 36 *PIONEER AND HIGH-UP LAKES*


Kelly Lake
Kelly Cr
Miner
Englejard
Englejard Lake
Creek
Hamby
Hamby Lake
Berry
Berry Meadows
Creek
Fork
Creek
Van Houten Lake
Barrett Ranch
Center Mtn
BEAVERHEAD CO
LEMHI CO
RANGE
Moose Meadows
Berry L
Timberline L
Skytop Lake
High-up L
Pioneer Lake
Pioneer
Jahnke L
Jahnke
Jahnke
Creek
Blind
Canyon
CONTINENTAL
Tunnels
Skinner Meadows
Skinner Lake
BIG
Darkhorse Lake
Darkhorse Cr
Cowbone Lake
MP 483
Goldstone Pass
Goldstone
Stover
Dean Cr
Cr
U Turn Cr
Creek
Fork
Dick
Creek
Bloody
Swift Lake
Park
Lake
Bloody
Creek
Creek
Goldstone Mtn
MP 488 139
0
2
4 Miles



High-up Lake in the West Big Hole proposed wilderness. Fred Swanson photo.

to walk along this track as it winds among parks and groves. Watch for moose in the willow bottoms by the creek.

The trail climbs slowly and crosses the creek again about six miles from Van Houten Lake. Just past this crossing, the trail branches; the shortest route continues along the creek, while the right-hand trail climbs the hill to an old miner's cabin and eventually rejoins the main trail. After this intersection, the trail is closed to motor vehicles. The trail starts to climb more steeply as you approach the high peaks along the Continental Divide. Even at this high elevation (7,000 to 8,000 feet), there are large spruce and fir growing close to Pioneer Creek.

The route for the last few miles is a regular hiking trail. It crosses the north branch of Pioneer Creek and cuts across a slope to the south branch of the creek. There may still be evidence of a snow avalanche that started on the steep slopes to the south and littered the trail with trees a number of years ago. This section of the trail away from the stream may be confusing, so consult your map and watch for faint blazes.

Pioneer Lake lies about one mile past the avalanche area (about 10 miles from Van Houten Campground). It offers some good camping spots and a close-up look at the Continental Divide.

If you're ambitious, you may want to try a short climb up the hill west of Pioneer Lake on faint animal paths to High-Up Lake, actually a pair of alpine jewels just below the divide. There is a good campsite on the east end of the lake with a fine view back down the valley you've just labored up. A third lake, Skytop, lies over the next ridge, but its shores are rockier.

Try to catch the sunrise above the Big Hole Valley over the high peaks of the East Pioneer Mountains. A moonrise is also worth staying up for—ghostly light silhouetting the limbs of dead whitebark pine surrounding the lake. Pine beetles killed these trees decades ago, but this treeline forest is renewing itself.

Enjoy a small fire using deadfall at one of the fire rings in place at the lake. Chances are you'll be the only people at this remote spot; try to leave the lakeshore as undisturbed as it was when you came.

High-Up Lake is a great place to spend an extra day exploring. The Continental Divide is a short climb on steep talus above the south end of the lake. On top of the divide it's fairly common to see mountain goats among the crags. The west slope of the divide is gentler than the steep glacier-carved east wall, and it's possible to walk north and south along the crest amid wild scenery. Center Mountain rises three miles to the north along the ridge. It can provide a moderate, nontechnical climb, but use caution among its loose slide rock. To the west are the rugged Big Horn Crags in the great wild area of central Idaho, the River of No Return Wilderness.

Both Pioneer and High-Up lakes have small cutthroat, but neither are noted for fishing.

The Big Hole and its surrounding mountains are notorious for their mosquitoes. Plan a late summer hike or bring plenty of repellent. The trail along Pioneer Creek stays close to water most of the distance. Fishermen and less ambitious hikers will enjoy ambling along the willow-bordered stream on the lower portion of the trail.

High-Up Lake and most of the Pioneer Creek Valley are within the 76,600-acre West Big Hole proposed wilderness.—*Fred Swanson*

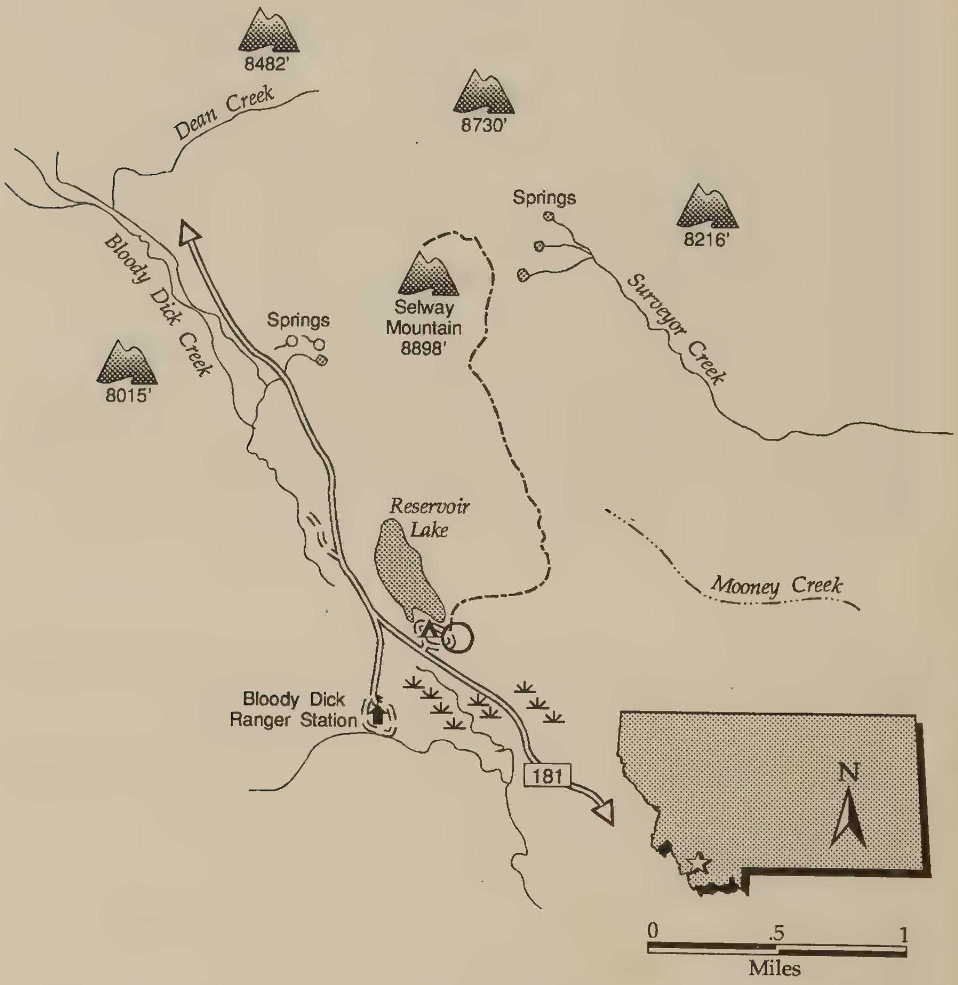
HIKE 37 *SELWAY MOUNTAIN*

General description: A relatively easy hike with an impressive view of southwest Montana.
General location: 40 miles west of Clark Canyon Reservoir.
Maps: Selway Mountain and Kitty Creek USGS Quads and Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Views and the site of an old fire lookout and a heliport.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,833 ft.
Season: June through September.
Information: District Ranger, Dillon Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, 420 N. Barrett Street, Dillon, MT 59725, or call (406) 683-3900.

The hike: Ascending this 9,000-foot-high peak requires moderate effort for an outstanding view. The trail is easy enough for inexperienced hikers, but scenic enough for veterans. The mountain's close proximity to Reservoir Lake Campground makes it an appealing day hike while camping on Reservoir Lake. In addition, moose often wander through the marshy Bloody Dick Creek, which runs along the road, and the surrounding continental divide area is prime elk habitat.

From Dillon, drive nineteen miles south on Interstate 15 to the Clark Canyon Reservoir Exit. Turn west onto State Road 324 heading toward Grant and

HIKE 37 *SELWAY MOUNTAIN*


8482'
Dean Creek
8730'
Springs
8216'
Bloody Dick Creek
Springs
Selway Mountain 8898'
Surveyor Creek
8015'
Reservoir Lake
Mooney Creek
Bloody Dick Ranger Station
181
N
0
.5
1
Miles

Salmon, Idaho. After about twenty miles, watch for a national forest access sign and then another for the Reservoir Lake Campground. Turn right onto Forest Road 181 and follow the signs and dirt road eighteen miles northwest to the campground. The trailhead starts in the boat trailer parking lot next to the lake.

The trail begins at the gate and runs for about two hundred feet along the lake before it forks. Take the right fork to Selway Mountain. The other trail circles Reservoir Lake. The trail rises quickly up a hillside meadow. The path is somewhat steep here, and cuts along switchbacks for the next half mile. You can look out onto the Bloody Dick Creek and the lake below as you hike up the hillside. Soon the trail flattens out and begins a long steady climb for the next mile.

The woods are almost exclusively lodgepole pine, dotted with patches of blue mountain lupines. This area is a good example of the fire cycle, whereby the overcrowded lodgepole and deadfall on the forest floor are due to burn and make way for new vegetation. New generations of lodgepole will slowly accumulate after many years to continue the cycle.

As the trail begins to turn sharply eastward, whitebark pine dot the woods. Then the trail circles the peak to the north side of the mountain and follows contour along the slope. Through the trees you can see the sides of Bloody Dick Peak to the east. After 0.25 miles, the trail turns steeply upwards to the top. Some Douglas-fir and spruce grow here, but slowly the trees thin out as you reach the top.

In 1942, a thirty-foot-high lookout tower was built by the Forest Service at the top of Selway Mountain. It was manned for twenty-nine years and supported a heliport but was demolished and burned in 1976. The Forest Service has since abandoned most of its lookouts and now relies on aircraft for spotting during fire season. There are still some remains of the tower at the summit, and the heliport itself is still intact. The site of the heliport is easy to find and makes a good spot for lunch with a view to the south out across the Continental Divide. The bald south slope of the summit is talus and extremely steep, dropping quickly into the woods and ridge below.

Once on top of Selway mountain, it is easy to see why this shaved top made and ideal spot for a lookout tower. Off to the north, you can see past Black mountain, the timber covered peak just behind Selway, and across the Big Hole Valley all the way to the snow-capped Anaconda-Pintlers. To the west, the view stretches past the Bitterroots and the Continental Divide to the jagged Lemhi Range in Idaho. Far past Bloody Dick Peak, to the northeast, are the high summits of the Pioneer Range: Torrey, Tweedy, and Baldy mountains. And to the south, Bloody Dick Creek runs past Reservoir Lake out toward Lemhi pass and south to the Montana/Idaho border.

The trip back is all down hill, and the total time for the hike, including lunch and time to soak in the view from the top, should be about five hours.—*Douglas Schnitzspahn*

HIKE 38 *DEADMAN AND NICHOLIA CREEKS*

General description: A 3- or 4-day hike for experienced hikers in the little-visited Italian Peaks proposed wilderness.
General location: 20 miles southwest of Lima.
Maps: Scott Peak USGS Quad and the Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: The huge glacial cirque of Italian Peak, high on the Continental Divide.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,760 feet.
Elevation loss: 2,760 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Dillon Ranger District,

Beaverhead National Forest, 420 Barrett St., Dillon, MT 59725, or call (406) 683-3960.

The hike: Few hikers visit this remote, isolated mountain range in the far southwestern corner of the state, but its spectacular alpine scenery is sure to make it more popular in years to come.

The trailhead is remote but easy to find using the Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan Map. Turn off Interstate 15 at the Dell exit, forty-five miles south of Dillon. Follow the gravel road that parallels the interstate's western side for 1.5 miles south, where a road turns westward up Big Sheep Canyon. After eighteen miles the road branches; take the left branch toward Nicholia-Deadman. In 2.25 miles the road branches again. Continue to the left up the broad valley of Nicholia Creek.

Another 4.5 miles will bring you to a creek crossing, half a mile inside the National Forest boundary and a good place to start the hike. If you have two vehicles, take one with high clearance over the road to Deadman Lake toward the southeast; if not, walk 6.8 miles to Deadman Lake.

Deadman Lake is a small pond lying in a steep, V-shaped valley; it offers some cutthroat fishing. Once the trail heads south up the right side of the lake, the trail (such as it is) enters the proposed wilderness area and leaves the rough jeep track behind.

The trails in this region receive little use and have a tendency to fade away in the many grassy meadows along the track. A few tips are in order: Don't trust the trail as shown on the Scott Peak USGS Quad. It's very old, and inaccurate to boot. Do trust the blazes on the trees, which look like upside-down exclamation points. You'll always find the trail if you stay in the valley bottoms near the stream and don't wander up the steep side slopes for any great distance.

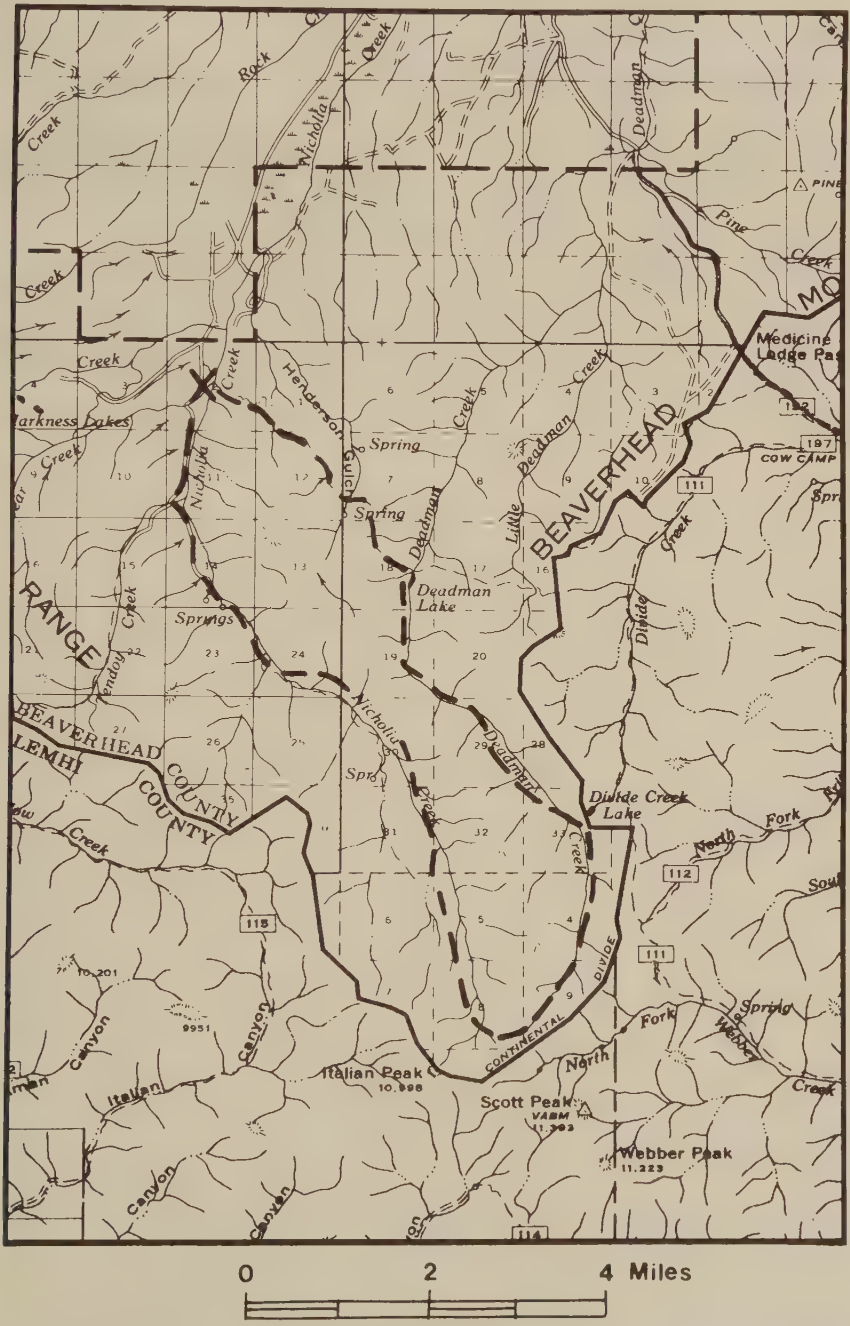
For four miles the trail follows Deadman Creek, frequently fording the small stream to avoid the little lakes formed by avalanches and mudslides coming off the high, nameless ridge to the west. Even in late July, snow may remain at the base of these avalanche chutes, which can easily be avoided by remaining on the eastern side of the stream.

The valley at this point begins to take on a more alpine character, showing signs of the glaciers that once carved the U-shaped upper canyon. The pretty meadows here are a good place for the first night's camp. Or, if you have the energy, you can hike up to Divide Lake, which lies in a rocky depression just a few yards on the Idaho side of the Continental Divide. It's also perfectly invisible from the Deadman Creek side. The old trail used to climb the grassy slope up to a broad saddle on the divide to the lake, but it's now grown over. Use your topo map and you shouldn't have any problem.

The advantage of camping at Divide Lake is that you may catch a few cutthroat for dinner (Idaho fishing license required). The disadvantage is having to climb the four hundred feet up to the lake and back down again to continue the hike. No water is available in Deadman above Divide Lake.

The trail climbs gradually through the alpine meadows of the upper Deadman drainage, with the steep rocky ridge of the Continental Divide looming overhead to the left. At one point, a huge geological formation, called a breach anticline, forms a cliff along the divide, resembling a meteor impact crater. About four miles from the Divide Lake turnoff, the trail reaches the pass between the Deadman and Nicholia creek drainages. Here at 9,400 feet,

HIKE 38 *DEADMAN AND NICHOLIA CREEKS*


Rock
Creek
Nicholia
Deadman
PINE
Pine
Creek
Creek
Harkness Lakes
Creek
Henderson
Gulch
Spring
Spring
Creek
Deadman
Little
Deadman
Creek
Medicine
Lodge Pass
BEAVERHEAD
197
COW CAMP
111
Creek
Nicholia
Deadman
Deadman
Lake
Springs
RANGE
Creek
Divide
BEAVERHEAD
LEMHI
COUNTY
COUNTY
Nicholia
Creek
Deadman
Creek
Spr
Divide Creek
Lake
North
Fork
112
115
111
DIVIDE
CONTINENTAL
10,201
9951
Canyon
Canyon
Italian
Italian Peak
10,998
Scott Peak
VABM
11,393
Webber Peak
11,223
Fork
North
Spring
Webber
Creek
Canyon
Canyon
114
0
2
4 Miles

Panoramic views from the Continental Divide in the Italian Peaks. Rosemary Rowe photo.

the alpine scenery is spectacular, with the knife-edge ridge of the divide rising up to the 10,998-foot summit of Italian Peak. Keep your eyes peeled for bighorn sheep and goats up on the high slopes.

The trail switchbacks down a steep talus slope into the rolling alpine meadows at the base of the north wall of Italian Peak. A snowfield lingers year-round on Italian Peak's north wall, perhaps aspiring to become a glacier. This alpine basin makes a perfect second night's campsite and may convince you to spend an extra day exploring the meadows and talus slopes of this huge cirque. This is the southernmost point in Montana, and surely it's one of the prettiest.

Going northward, the trail descends the broad, green valley of Nicholia Creek, staying on the western side of the stream just above the bogs in the creek bottom. Once again, the trail tends to disappear in some of the meadows, but it's blazed through the forested parts. This part of the Nicholia Creek drainage is considered a segment of the recently completed, sixty-mile Continental Divide Trail. (Contact the Dillon Ranger District for more information.) At one large meadow, about three miles from the cirque basin, the route is marked by a series of five-foot-high posts.

Past this meadow, the trail enters the lower reaches of Nicholia Creek and becomes very well-defined, especially after it crosses to the eastern bank of the stream. For six miles, the route follows an old, grass-grown jeep track through the sagebrush flats. Be sure to turn around frequently to see the changing views of Italian Peak and Scott Peak over in Idaho. Some 8.5 miles after leaving the cirque at the base of Italian Peak, you reach your waiting car.

Although there are several fresh springs in both the Deadman and Nicholia valleys, you should be prepared to treat your water, since cows graze the meadows along most of the route. The bugs can be bad as well, so bring lots of insect repellent.

The high pass between Nicholia and Deadman creeks is usually clear of snow by the Fourth of July, but check local conditions with the Forest Service before you start. The Forest Service has proposed wilderness status for the Italian Peaks area.—*Ed Madej and Rosemary Rowe*

The Pioneers

Overview

Steep, rugged, and strikingly beautiful, the east Pioneers begin at 6,000 feet and rise swiftly to a cloud-piercing 11,000 feet. A massive wall of granite slices northward through the range for thirty miles. Shaped by glaciers, the upper elevations of the range abound with cliff-lined cirques and mountain lakes. The lower slopes are dominated by ancient stands of lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir, with spruce in the creek bottoms. The higher elevations support whitebark pine and alpine tundra. The world's oldest stand of lodgepole pine lives in Effie Creek.

The west Pioneers have the largest remaining roadless area in southwest Montana. A forested wilderness of rolling terrain and rich wildlife habitat, the west Pioneers provide a gentle contrast to the craggy summits of the east Pioneers.

The Big Hole River circles the Pioneers. Cutthroat, rainbow, brook, and golden trout, as well as some arctic grayling live in the streams and lakes of the Pioneers.

HIKE 39 *BOBCAT LAKES*

General description: A moderate, 8-mile day hike or overnight trip in the West Pioneer Mountains.

General location: In an eastern drainage of the West Pioneer Mountains, 20 miles south of Wise River and 60 miles southwest of Butte in the Beaverhead National Forest.

Maps: Odell Lake and Shaw Mountain USGS Quads, and the Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan.

Special attractions: Lower Bobcat Lake is one of several lakes in the West Pioneers that support the rare southern grayling.

Difficulty: Moderate.

Elevation gain: 2,000 feet.

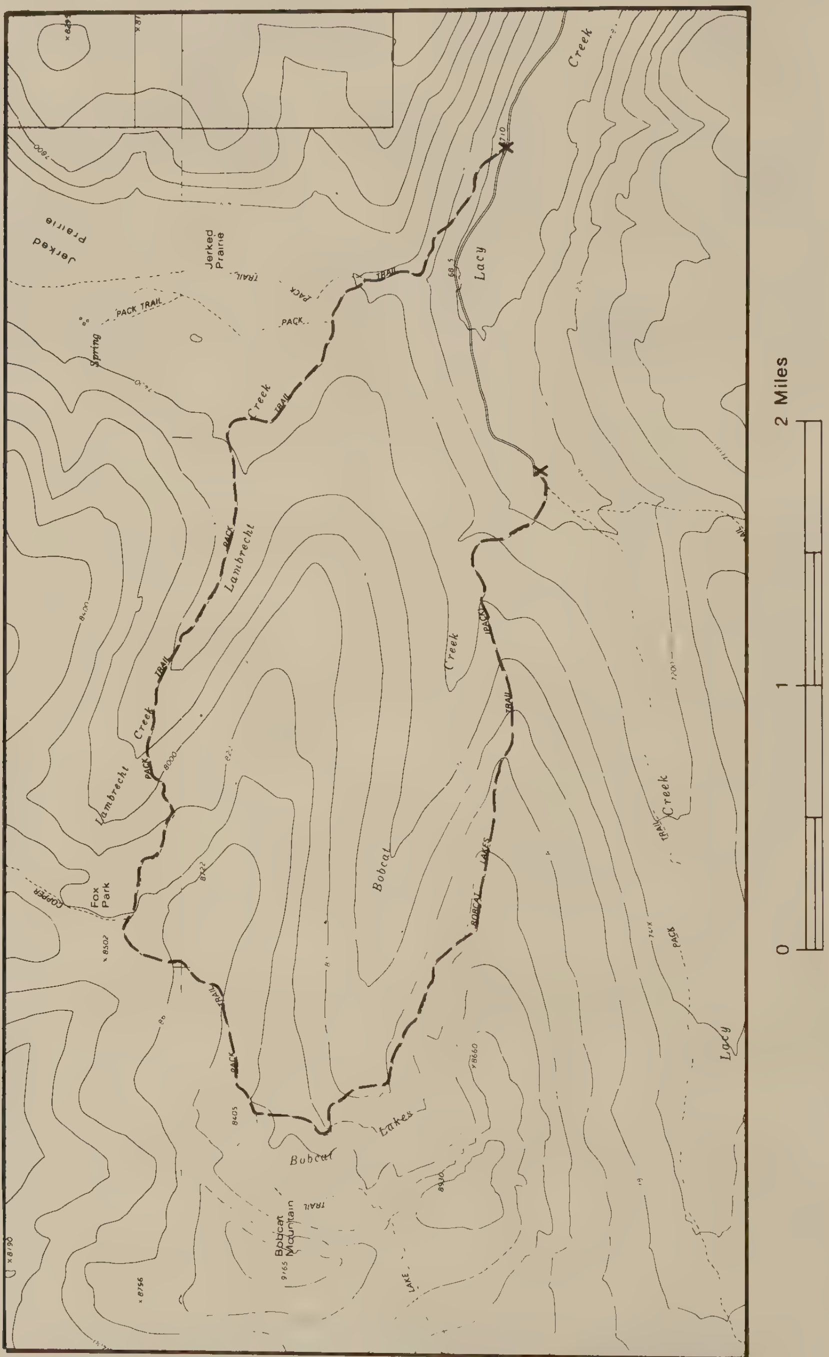
Season: July through September.

For more information: Write the District Ranger, Wise River Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, Box 100, Wise River, MT 59762, or call (406) 832-3178.

The hike: Bobcat Lakes lie in small glacial cirques in the middle of the gentle West Pioneer Mountains. There are two good trails to the lakes, and it is possible to make this a loop trip. Both trails begin from Forest Road #90, which follows Lacy Creek, a tributary of Wise River.

To get there, drive south from the town of Wise River on the Wise River Road for about fifteen miles. A mile or so after the Wise River Road leaves the river canyon and enters a broad meadow, turn right on Forest Road #90 (Lacy Creek Road) and go west. About two miles up Lacy Creek Road, a narrow, not-too-obvious, old wagon road angles steeply uphill to the right, climbs out of Lacy Creek Valley, and meets Trail #26 in about a mile. There is a gate where

HIKE 39 *BOBCAT LAKES*



Creek
Lacy
7710
7800
Jerked Prairie
Jerked Prairie
TRAIL
PACK
PACK TRAIL
PACK
Spring
Creek
TRAIL
PACK
Lambrecht
TRAIL
Creek
PACK
8000
8400
Lambrecht
Fox Park
COPPER
8502
8722
Creek
PACK
TRAIL
Bobcat
BOBCAT
LAKES
Creek
TRAIL
PACK
Lacy
TRAIL
PACK
8605
Bobcat
Lakes
8660
8930
TRAIL
Bobcat Mountain
9165
8756
8190
LAKE
2 Miles
1
0

the old wagon road leaves Lacy Creek, so you must park and walk up the road.

Trail #26 heads west along a small stream through thick stands of lodgepole, spruce, and fir. After a little over two miles, you come to a pretty meadow near the junction of the trail to the Bobcat Lakes. Turn southwest (left) onto this trail and hike for about two more miles to the lakes. The total distance from Lacy Creek Road is about six miles.

A more direct route to the Bobcat Lakes begins just past the end of Forest Road #90, about four miles from the Wise River Road. Park at the Lacy Creek trailhead facility, cross Bobcat Creek and take Trail #50 up the Bobcat Creek canyon about four miles to the lakes. This trail passes through attractive stands of lodgepole pine and fir, with occasional vistas across the broad slopes of the West Pioneers. It climbs steadily and is steep in places.

Lower and Upper Bobcat lakes lie just below Bobcat Peak. At 9,241 feet, it is one of the higher points in the range. From the upper lake, a steep trail leads west to the ridge separating the Bobcat Creek and Pattengail Creek drainages, the latter dissecting the heart of the West Pioneers. Elk often frequent the small meadows that dot this high area. Farther west is a long ridge topped by Odell Peak. Several cirque lakes lie at the base of this ridge.

An interesting feature of Lower Bobcat Lake is its grayling population. These native fish are now mostly restricted to the Big Hole River drainage. The grayling have specialized habitat requirements that make it hard for them to compete with other sport fish in lower-elevation waters. The remoteness of the Bobcat Lakes helps them survive. Please take care not to disturb the small stream that drains Lower Bobcat Lake—the grayling depend on the fine gravels in the streambed for spawning.

As with any backcountry lake, it's best to avoid camping on the lakeshore. However, there are several campsites along the margin of the woods surrounding Bobcat Lakes. If you're diligent, you can find enough deadfall for a good fire.

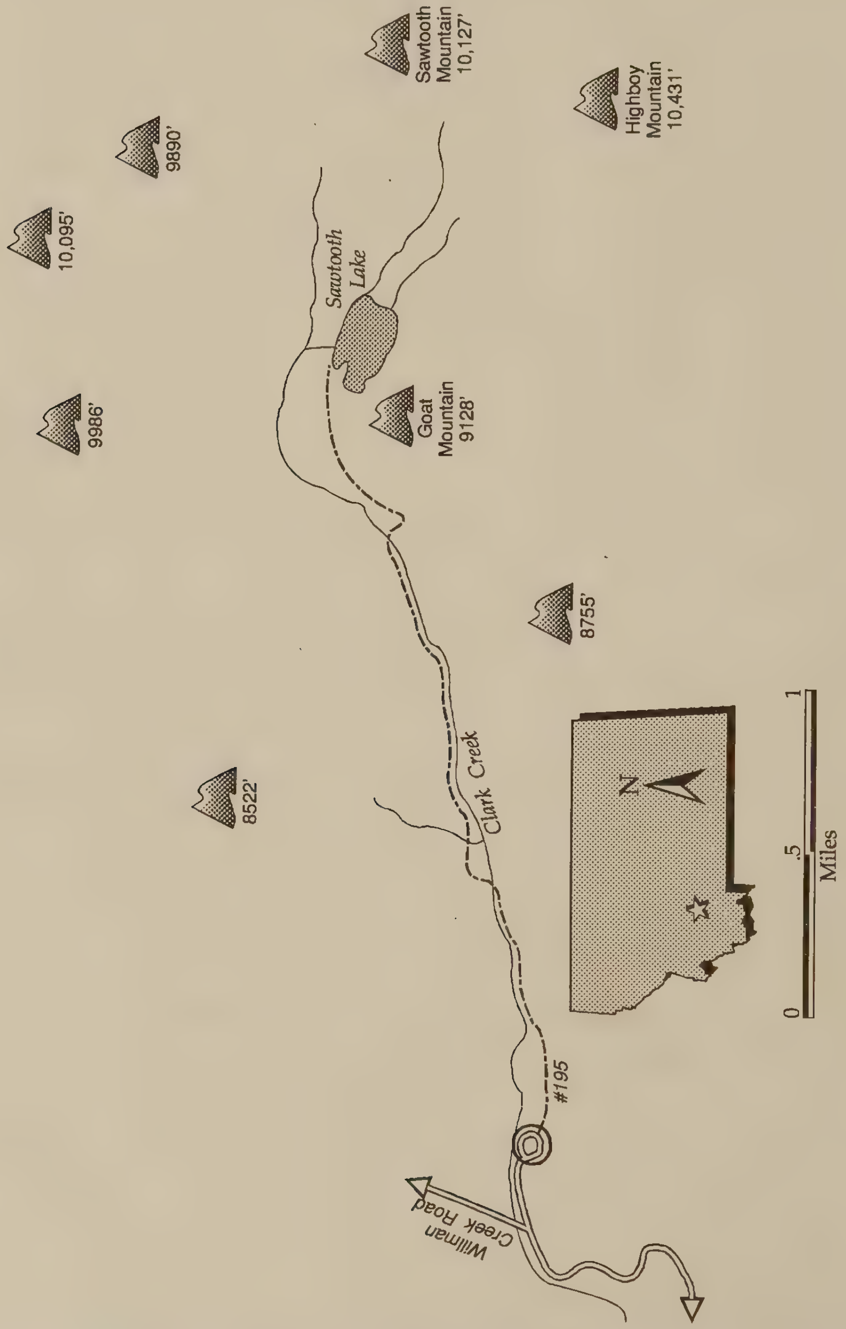
For an enjoyable loop trip, leave your car at the end of Forest Road #90, take Trail #50 to the lakes, and return via Trial #26. Where you rejoin the Lacy Creek Road, stow your pack and walk a mile or so up the road to retrieve your car. There is drinking water near both trailheads, but fill your canteens here, as the rest of the hike may be dry.

In 1981, the Forest Service recommended against wilderness protection for the West Pioneers Wilderness study area and instead proposed increased logging for these remote mountains.—*Fred Swanson*

HIKE 40 *SAWTOOTH LAKE*

General description: An easy 4-mile hike to a lake filled with golden trout.
General location: Near Elkhorn Hot Springs in the Pioneers northwest of Dillon.
Maps: Elkhorn Hot Springs USGS Quads and a Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: A graceful lake with too many good campsites.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,621 ft.
Season: July through September.

HIKE 40 *SAWTOOTH LAKE*


Sawtooth Mountain 10,127'
Highboy Mountain 10,431'
9890'
10,095'
Sawtooth Lake
Goat Mountain 9128'
9986'
8755'
Clark Creek
8522'
N
0
.5
1
Miles
#195
Willman Creek Road

Information: District Ranger, Dillon Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, 610 N. Montana Street, Dillon, MT 59725, or call (406) 683-3900.

The hike: Sawtooth Lake rests in a cirque surrounded by Goat, Highboy, and Sawtooth Mountains. Even in summer light snows often accent the crags and their slopes above the cold. This hike is popular because of the unique species of fish that inhabit Sawtooth Lake. Golden trout are rare and getting rarer.

To find the trailhead, first find Elkhorn Hot Springs. Drive south of Wise River on the paved National Forest Scenic Byway 484 for thirty-four miles. The last six miles are dirt. At Elkhorn Hot Springs turn left on well-marked Willman Creek Road passing through the Taylor subdivision. Follow the road for 1.75 miles to the fork and go right for 0.25 miles to the trailhead. The trailhead has several parking spaces and might soon have restrooms.

From the trailhead, the hike follows Clark Creek at stream gradient for three miles. The trail crosses the creek on logs twice. The second crossing can be treacherous if the logs are wet. The hike passes through mature lodgepole pine and Englemann spruce. Motorcycles are allowed on the trail, but it is rocky in parts and difficult to ride. So it is unlikely hikers will encounter motorcycles here.

The last mile before the lake turns southeast toward Goat Mountain and climbs switchbacks to the lake. Evidence of humans is fairly common. Past campers were overly ambitious about building their own fire rings, which dot the shoreline. This lake could absorb thirty campers at once, but it would diminish the wilderness experience for everyone.

The best campsites are on the peninsula to the right (south) upon arrival. The second best place to camp is just north of the inlet.

Use one of the existing fire rings.

The south shore of the lake is a talus slope that offers an ideal place to throw a line in. The trout are temperamental but very catchable. Twelve-inch golden trout are common throughout the lake.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 41 *TORREY LAKE*

General description: A 17-mile round-trip for hikers, backpackers, fishermen, and climbers.

General location: 25 miles northwest of Dillon, in the East Pioneers.

Maps: Torrey Mountain, Maurice Mountain, and Vipond USGS Quads; and Beaverhead National Forest Map.

Special attractions: The lake itself, nearly 9,000 feet in elevation, half a mile long by a quarter-mile wide, with good fishing. Torrey Mountain and Tweedy Mountain are available for mountaineers, and many granite features are available for technical climbers.

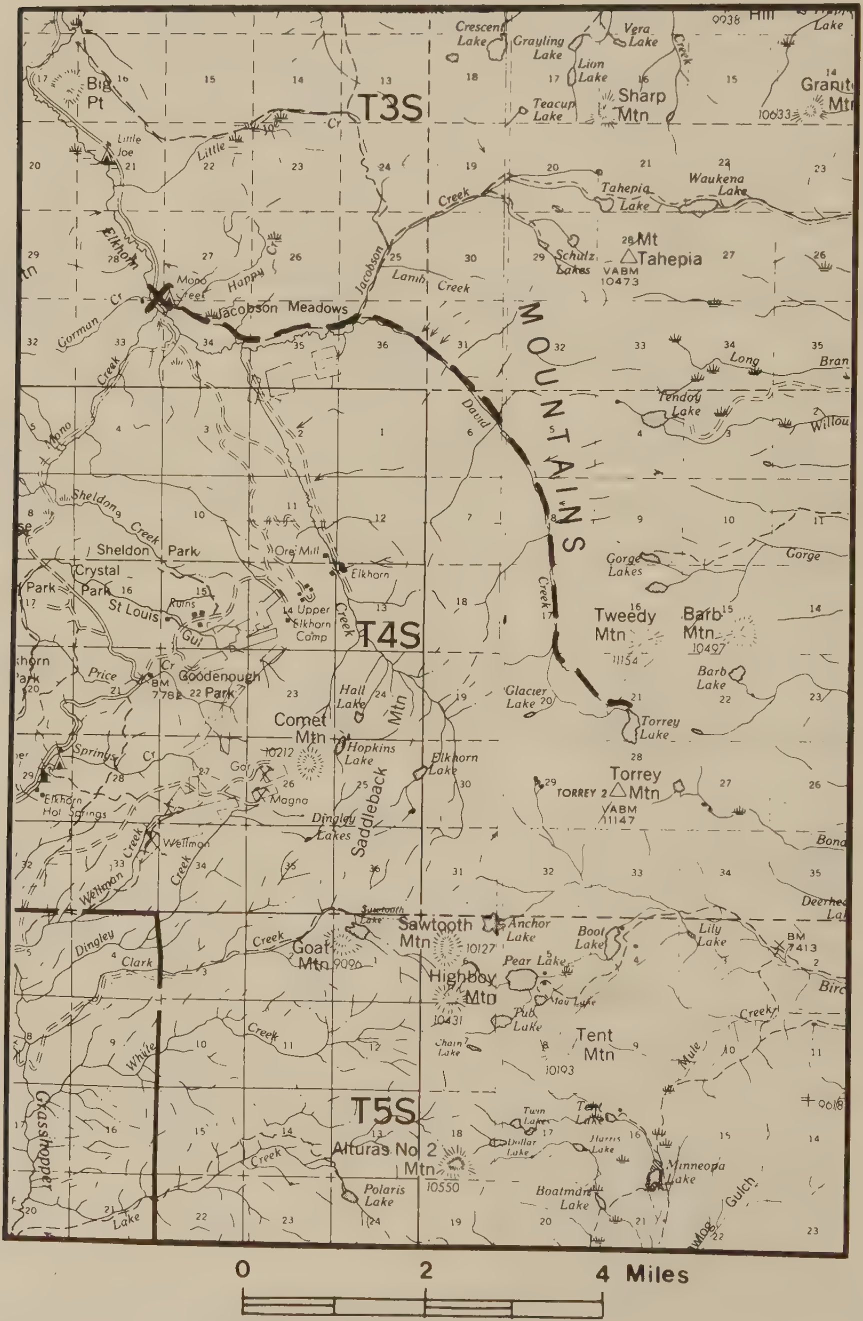
Difficulty: Moderate.

Elevation gain: 2,070 feet.

Season: July through September.

For more information: Write District Ranger, Wise River Ranger District, Box 100, Wise River, MT 59762, or call (406) 832-3178.

HIKE 41 *TORREY LAKE*



Crescent Lake
Grayling Lake
Vera Lake
Lion Lake
Teacup Lake
Sharp Mtn
Granite Mtn
10633
9938
Lake
Big Pt
Little Joe
Little Joe Cr
T3S
Creek
Tahepia Lake
Waukena Lake
Elkhorn
Jacobson
Lamb Creek
Schulz Lakes
Mt Tahepia
VABM 10473
Mono Creek
Happy Cr
Gorman Cr
Jacobson Meadows
MOUNTAINS
Long
Bran
Tendoy Lake
Willow
Mono
David
Sheldon Creek
Sheldon Park
Crystal Park
Park
St Louis Gul
Ruins
Ore Mill
Elkhorn
Upper Elkhorn Camp
Elkhorn Creek
T4S
Gorge Lakes
Gorge
Tweedy Mtn
11154
Barb Mtn
10497
Barb Lake
Creek
Price Cr
BM 7782
Goodenough Park
Hall Lake
Mtn
Comet Mtn
10212
Hopkins Lake
Glacier Lake
Torrey Lake
Elkhorn Lake
Torrey Mtn
TORREY 2
VABM 11147
Springs Cr
Gor
Magna
Elkhorn Hot Springs
Dingley Lakes
Saddleback
Wellman Creek
Wellman
Creek
Bond
Deerhead Lake
Sawtooth Lake
Sawtooth Mtn
10127
Anchor Lake
Boot Lake
Lily Lake
BM 7413
Goat Mtn
9096
Pear Lake
Highboy Mtn
10431
Tau Lake
Pub Lake
Birch
Creek
Dingley
Clark
Creek
White
Chain Lake
Tent Mtn
10193
Mule
9018
Grasshopper
T5S
Twin Lakes
Tent Lake
Dollar Lake
Harris Lake
Alturas No 2 Mtn
10550
Creek
Minneopa Lake
Polaris Lake
Boatman Lake
Gulch
Lake
0
2
4 Miles

The hike: The eastern portion of the Pioneer Range is such a confusing jumble of formations that geologists have yet to come up with a complete explanation for what happened here. Torrey Lake is in the middle of an area where molten rock intruded into the older formations from below and cooled there. After time and erosion removed the overburden of older rock, the granite backbone of this range was exposed.

The trail to Torrey Lake starts from the Mono Creek Campground. You can drive there from the north or south. The northern approach involves leaving Montana Highway 43 at Wise River and heading up the Wise River Road for about twenty-two miles. The southern approach leaves State Highway 278 and takes you past Polaris and the Maverick Mountain Ski Area. It's about twenty-two miles from the highway this way, too.

The first 2.5 miles of the trail wander through some open timber, and then the trail skirts Jacobson Meadows. Then you'll go back into the timber and, just above Jacobson Creek, you'll hit a trail junction. Take the right fork, which immediately drops down to cross Jacobson Creek and then heads up David Creek. You'll now have four miles of gently climbing trail through lodgepole stands, intermittent meadows, and spruce bottoms. The last two miles ascend 1,000 feet as the trail winds its way up through granite boulders to the lake.

In 1987, a major blowdown obliterated 1.5 miles of these last two miles to Torrey Lake. A new trail was constructed around and through the blowdown in 1988. At present, the trail is open to motorcycles, but usage is light.

The lakeshore is fragile, and you should camp back from it a bit in the whitebark pine forest. Looking south across the lake, you can see the ragged igneous hump of Torrey Mountain, 11,147 feet high. Behind to the northeast are the shredded granite cliffs and buttresses of Tweedy Mountain, 11,154 feet high. Granite towers stand on the divide between Tweedy and Torrey, west of Torrey. If you decide to climb around on the large rock slide between Torrey Peak and the lake, note that this slide shifted dramatically in 1981 and is still very unstable. Avoid the steep pitches of rubble, which will start to slide under your weight.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 42 *GRAYLING LAKES*

General description: A 6-mile trip to a lake filled basin deep in the Pioneers.
General location: West of Melrose at the end of Canyon Creek Road.
Maps: Vipond Park and Mount Tahepia USGS Quads and a Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Three peaceful lakes in the shadow of 10,144-foot-high Sharp Mountain.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,414 ft.
Season: July through September.
Information: District Ranger, Wise River Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, P.O. Box 100, Wise River, MT 59762, or call (406) 832-3178.

The hike: Outfitters from the Canyon Creek Ranch used this area in the past for guided fishing trips. The trail could see fairly regular summer traffic if the Canyon Creek Ranch reopens. But this area is still pristine.

To find the trailhead drive south of Butte on Interstate 15 and take the exit to Melrose. It is 17.5 miles of dirt roads from Melrose to the trailhead. From Melrose follow the fishing access signs west across the Big Hole River, passing by a campground on the left. Continue across a second bridge to a four-way intersection. Go straight through the intersection. After 1.5 miles from Melrose, the road forks. The left road goes to Cherry Creek, and the right road continues toward Canyon Creek. Go right. Follow the road straight up Trapper Creek for five miles to the old smelter town of Glendale. At the intersection in Glendale, turn right uphill for Canyon Creek. Nine miles from Melrose cross Canyon Creek. After three more miles, pass by the old Canyon Creek charcoal kilns. Then after thirteen miles and at the intersection with the road from Montana Highway 43 turn left for the last four miles of driving to the trailhead.

To accommodate the ranch, the Forest Service is considering plans to move the trailhead an additional 0.5 mile downstream. Watch for signs and a new trailhead. This could cut down on the driving and increase the hiking.

The campground at the trailhead has parking and restrooms but no garbage cans. Pack it in. Pack it out.

Trail #88 begins by crossing Canyon Creek on a two-log bridge. Canyon Creek supports small finger-sized brook trout. On the other side of the creek, the trail turns to the right and up the opposite slope. The old trail follows the river, but it ran too close to the ranch and was relocated. At mile 0.5, the trail crosses through a gate. Be sure to completely close it behind you. Continue following the Canyon Creek trail for 1.5 miles to its intersection with Trail #28. This section climbs gradually uphill through the trees and along the creek.

At the intersection, take Lion Creek Trail #28 on the left. It is four miles from this intersection to Grayling Lake. The first two miles continue along Canyon Creek at stream gradient. Then the trail turns west for the first stream crossing over Lion Creek. In the next two miles, the trail crosses Lion Creek four times. Almost all crossings are negotiable without wet feet. The next mile is a climb, the only real climb of the hike.

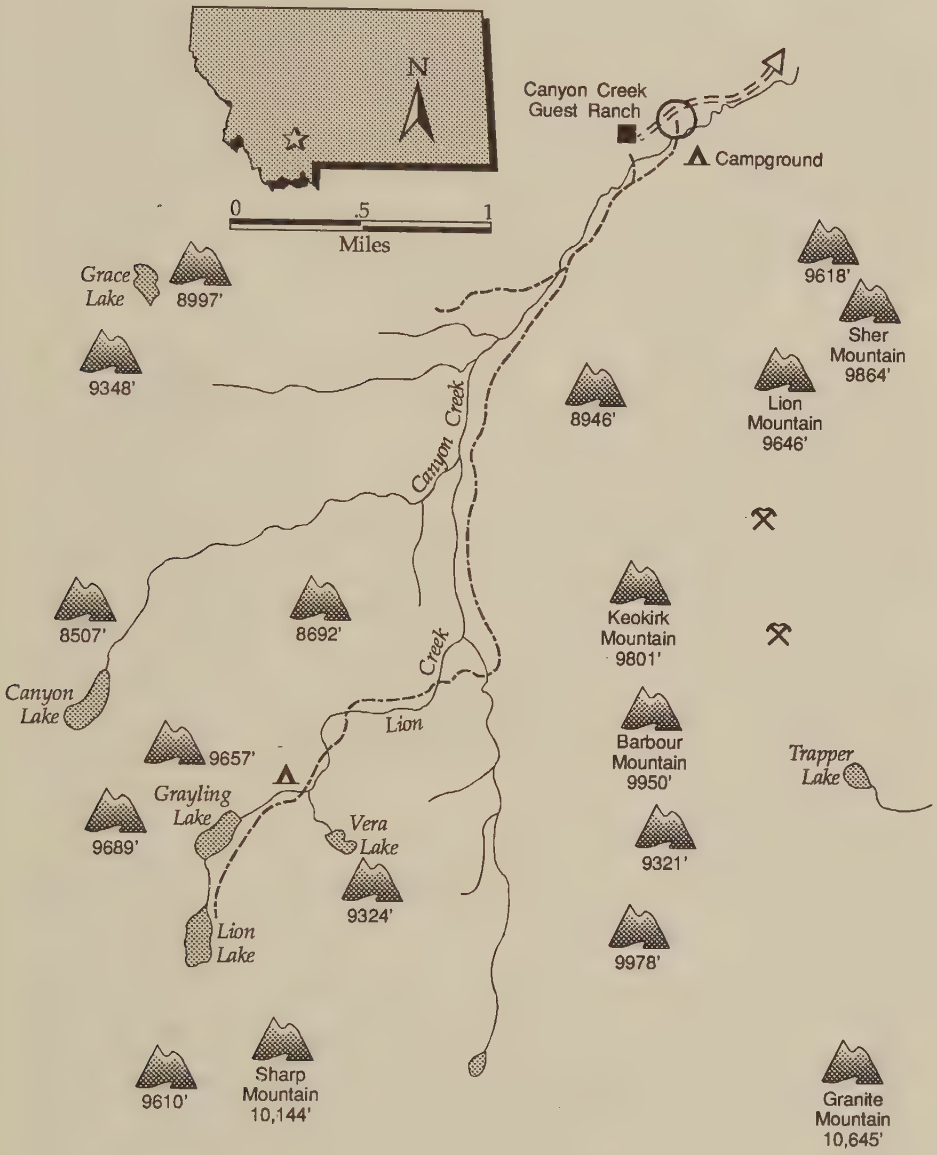
After the ascent, the trail crosses the flatlands below Vera Lake. You can easily reach Vera Lake by navigating south and a little east after the fourth crossing of Lion Creek. Vera Lake used to have fish but one visit will explain their absence. The lake is not deep enough for fish to survive the winter freeze.

Left of the trail at this last stream crossing is the only established campsite in the area. There is plenty of water from the stream, logs to sit on around the fire, and tent spaces galore. It offers a central base to explore all three lakes in the basin. No critical damage has occurred and the lakes remain almost wild.

Grayling Lake is just a little farther up the trail. It is listed as having grayling. But according to the Forest Service, the fish died. However, good fishing for cutthroat-rainbow hybrids lure fisherman to this area. Grayling Lake offers a view of the steep ridge separating it from Canyon Lake, which you can get to via Trail #88.

Above Grayling Lake 0.5 mile is Lion Lake. Lion Lake has similar fishing to Grayling and a view of Sharp Mountain. Sharp Mountain to the south is fairly obvious and definitely sharp. The return hike retraces your route to the trailhead. Not too many people hike here, but use could increase. Be sure to use low impact camping methods.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 42 *GRAYLING LAKES*


N
0
.5
1
Miles
Canyon Creek
Guest Ranch
Campground
Grace Lake
8997'
9348'
9618'
Sher Mountain 9864'
Lion Mountain 9646'
8946'
Canyon Creek
8507'
8692'
Canyon Lake
Creek
Lion
Keokirk Mountain 9801'
Barbour Mountain 9950'
Trapper Lake
9657'
Grayling Lake
9689'
Vera Lake
9321'
9324'
Lion Lake
9978'
9610'
Sharp Mountain 10,144'
Granite Mountain 10,645'

The Tobacco Root Mountains

Overview

The rugged peaks of the Tobacco Root Mountains dominate the western skyline of the Gallatin Valley. More than forty glacially sculpted lakes are located in this series of 10,000-foot-high peaks. Excellent fishing for cutthroat and rainbow trout rewards anglers in the unpolluted lakes and streams of these mountains. The Tobacco Roots are also home to good elk, moose, and mountain goat populations.

In the past, nearly every inch of the Tobacco Roots has been picked over and prospected. Hikers may find evidence indicating those areas where miners failed to find the mother lode. Many old jeep trails remain, and motorized use is allowed throughout the range. Under a recent proposal for wilderness designation, some areas would be protected from motorized use.

HIKE 43 *HOLLOWTOP LAKE*

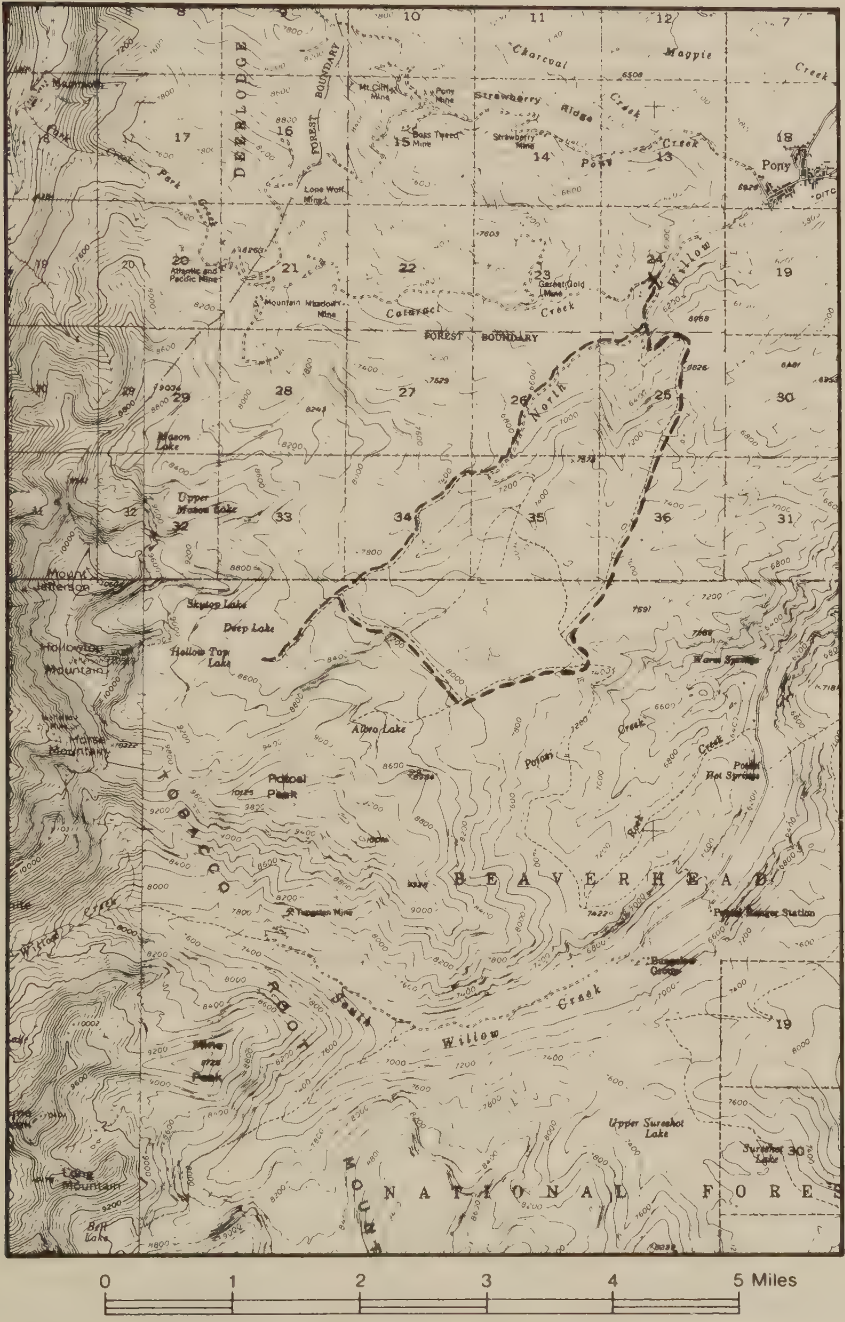
General Description: A moderate 12-mile, overnight round-trip to an attractive lake in a high-mountain basin.
General location: On the east side of the Tobacco Root Mountains in the Beaverhead National Forest, 55 miles west of Bozeman and 90 miles south of Helena.
Maps: Harrison Lake, Pony Mountain, and Potosie Peak USGS Quads and the Interagency Travel Plan of Southwest Montana.
Special attraction: Hollowtop Lake is bordered on three sides by the high peaks of the Tobacco Root Mountains.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,600 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Madison Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, 5 Forest Service Road, Ennis, MT 59729, or call (406) 628-4253.

The hike: The trailhead is 2.5 miles southwest of Pony, an interesting old mining town in the foothills of the Tobacco Roots, six miles southwest of Harrison. Drive west through Pony and proceed up a narrow dirt road 1.5 miles to a fork. Take the lower, left-hand road downhill to the North Fork of Willow Creek. There is a bridge over the creek about two miles from Pony. Beyond the bridge, a good road follows the creek to the trailhead at the Beaverhead National Forest boundary after about half a mile. Above this point, the trail is closed to vehicles over fifty inches wide.

Starting from the trailhead, walk across a bridge to the other side of the creek. In the spring, watch for fuzzy blue pasqueflowers in the grassy meadows.

Above the bridge, the trail climbs steadily along the north side of the creek,

HIKE 43 *HOLLOWTOP LAKE*



DEERLODGE
FOREST BOUNDARY
Charcoal
Magpie
Creek
Mt Cifford Mine
Pony Mine
Strawberry Ridge
Creek
Boss Tweed Mine
Strawberry Mine
Pony
Creek
Pony
Lone Wolf Mine
Atlantic and Pacific Mine
Mountain Meadow Mine
Cataract
Creek
Garnet Gold Mine
Willow
FOREST BOUNDARY
North
Mason Lake
Upper Mason Lake
Mount Jefferson
Skytop Lake
Deep Lake
Hollow Top Lake
Hollowtop Mountain
Horse Mountain
Albro Lake
Potosi Peak
Potosi
Creek
Warm Springs
Potosi Hot Springs
Red
TOBACCO ROOT
BEAVERHEAD
Tungsten Mine
Potosi Ranger Station
Bungalow Camp
South
Willow
Creek
Mine Peak
Upper Sureshot Lake
Sureshot Lake
Long Mountain
Bell Lake
NATIONAL FORE
0
1
2
3
4
5 Miles

passing a good camping spot. Three miles from the trailhead, the trail forks. The south fork (Trail #333) heads over the ridge to Albro Lake; the other fork (North Willow Creek Trail #301 to Hollowtop Lake) continues along the north side of the creek through groves of spruce and fir and back into open meadows.

About 3.5 miles from the trailhead, the trail again crosses the creek. Pause here to fill canteens, as the trail heads away from the main creek at this point. This stream crossing can be tricky during early summer runoff, and a stout staff selected from among the deadfall will help. Later in the summer, you can more easily cross the stream on jammed logs.

Above the crossing, the trail climbs more steeply to the 8,550-foot lake. You'll pass some beautiful, sloping meadows with great views east into the Gallatin Valley and the Spanish Peaks. Hollowtop Lake (which has pan-sized rainbows) is about six miles from the trailhead and is the source of the stream you've been following.

There's a good campsite near the outlet. Northwest of the lake is Hollowtop Mountain, at 10,604 feet the highest point in the Tobacco Roots. Mount Jefferson (10,513 feet) lies west of the lake, and to the south is Potosi Peak, named by miners after a fabulous mine in the Andes. All three mountains are technically easy scrambles, but be prepared for rough weather on the windswept alpine slopes.

Once at Hollowtop Lake, you may wish to explore Deep Lake, the next lake up the drainage. Simply skirt around Hollowtop Lake to the inlet on the northwest end and follow the trail found here a quarter-mile to Deep Lake. Don't forget your fishing rod.

Instead of backtracking on the return trip, you can loop back to your car using Albro Lake Trail #333. To reach this trail, return down the North Willow Creek Trail one mile from Hollowtop Lake to the intersection with Potosi Peak Trail #365. A 1.5-mile hike along this route will connect you with the Albro Lake Trail. Take this another 1.5 miles east to the junction with Park Trail #302 and then continue northeast three miles to the junction with the North Willow Creek Trail. From here it's only another half-mile back to the parking area.—*Fred Swanson*

HIKE 44 *CURLY LAKE HIGHLINE TRAIL*

General description: A rough 15-mile hike over a 10,000 foot plateau to a sub-alpine lake.
General location: In the Tobacco Root Mountains southeast of Butte.
Maps: Manhead Mountain USGS Quad and Deer Lodge National Forest Map.
Special attractions: A spectacular high country alpine traverse in an undiscovered corner of the Tobacco Root Mountains.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,600 ft.
Season: Early July through September.
Information: District Ranger, Jefferson Ranger District, Deer Lodge National Forest, P.O. Box F, Whitehall, MT 59722, or call (406) 287-3223.

The hike: You can do this hike as a long, strenuous day hike or an overnight hike if you want to camp at Curly Lake. Even as an overnighter, the second day is strenuous with several steep ascents and descents.

To reach the trailhead, take the Cardwell exit on Interstate 90, seven miles east of Whitehall. Drive south on Montana Highway 359 (Harrison Road) through Cardwell and follow for about five miles. The South Boulder Road, marked with a Forest Service sign, will appear on your right just after crossing the South Boulder River. Turn right and follow this road approximately eleven miles to the old mining town of Mammoth. Proceed through Mammoth to the trailhead two miles beyond town on the right side of the road. The South Boulder Road is rough and rocky but passable by a two-wheel-drive car.

The trail to Curly Lake is four miles long, and climbs, 2,000 feet. It begins by switchbacking up a steep sidehill, quickly gaining elevation and views of the South Boulder Valley to the east. After about a mile, the trail moderates and crosses a series of meadows along Curly Creek. These meadows have a wealth of wildflowers. The trail then climbs again at the two mile mark, and then climbs gradually through lodgepole forest. Many springs and seeps are found along this stretch. About four miles from the trailhead, the trail again levels out crossing another hanging valley before a final climb to Curly Lake basin. Just before the lake, a trail turns south to Westphal Park—another scenic high traverse. Continue straight, taking the right-hand trail to the lake.

Curly Lake sits in a high subalpine basin at 8,800 feet. The lake is tucked in the timber north of the trail. While the lake in not unduly spectacular, the alpine meadows and meandering creek south of the lake are beautiful, offering views of alpine peaks to the south end of the cirque. If you decide to camp, there are good spots between the lake and the meadows, as well as farther up the trail past the lake. Curly lake is fishless. As an indication of how little known this area is, none of the 10,000-foot-high peaks surrounding Curly Lake are named.

The creek below the lake is the last reliable place to filter water for the next five miles.

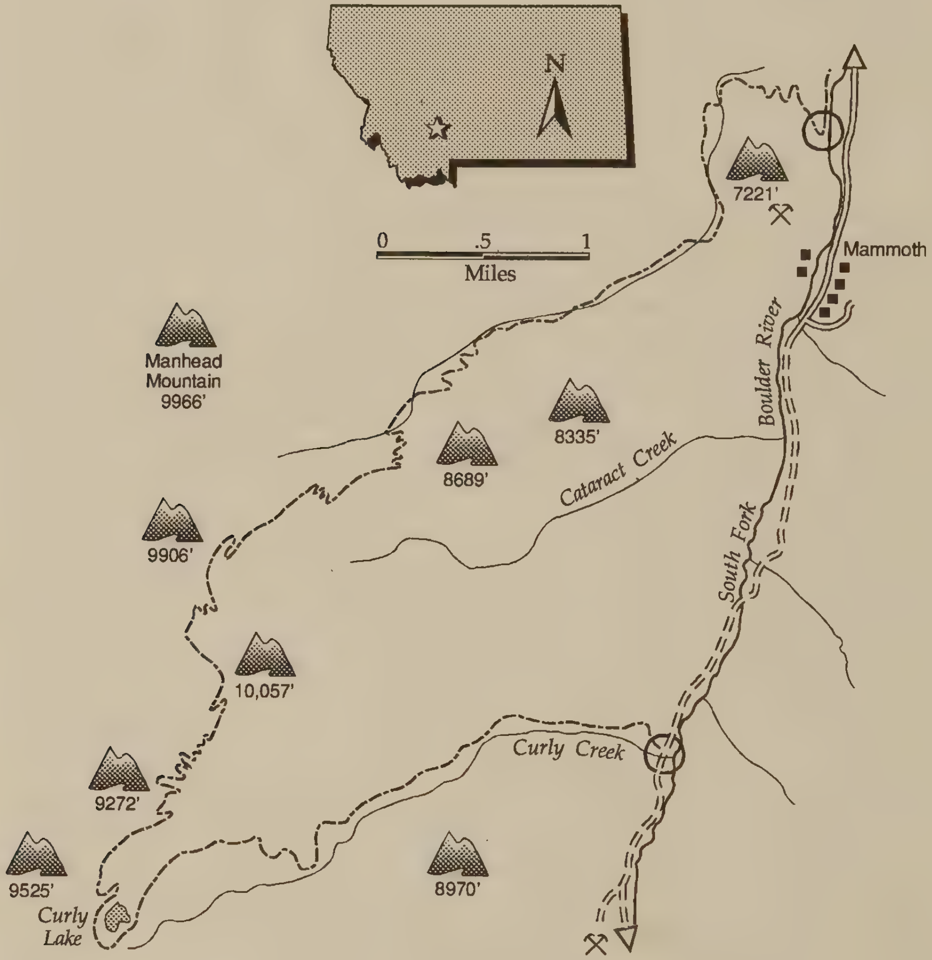
From Curly Lake, the trail proceeds on a hogback between the lake and meadow for 0.25 miles before reaching another trail junction. What appears to be the main trail, straight ahead, is the newly constructed trail to Beall Lake. Do not take this trail. Instead, turn sharply right to the northeast on the Curly Lake Trail. This trial climbs very gradually on switchbacks as it rises above the lake and surrounding basin. About one mile past Curly Lake, an open saddle divides the Curly Creek drainage from the Beall Creek drainage.

Suddenly, a view of the world below opens up. To the immediate southwest lies the rugged Beall Creek Canyon, and immediately beyond it, the Jefferson River Valley, five miles and 4,000 feet below. Watch for mountain goats in this rough rocky terrain.

From this saddle, the trail is a real treat as it crosses two or more miles above the tree line. The trail climbs to the northeast from the saddle, crossing through a notch in the ridge. It then gradually traverses a steep alpine slope toward another saddle to the north. Approximately a mile from the notch, cross through the saddle onto a large high alpine plateau, almost a mile across.

To the right, (east) scramble up a small unnamed peak, (10,057 feet on the map) for the high point of the trip. To the north lies Manhead Mountain and the more gentle northern Tobacco Roots. To the southeast, across the South Boulder Valley, is Hollowtop Mountain, the highest peak in the range. South

HIKE 44 *CURLY LAKE HIGHLINE TRAIL*



N
0
.5
1
Miles
7221'
Mammoth
Boulder River
Manhead Mountain 9966'
8335'
8689'
Cataract Creek
9906'
South Fork
10,057'
Curly Creek
9272'
9525'
8970'
Curly Lake

from Hollowtop, and beyond the terrain you just crossed, is a mass of ragged alpine mountains in the center of the Tobacco Root Range that surrounds the headwaters of the South Boulder River. Beyond these peaks are glimpses of the Madison and Snowcrest Ranges. To the west, across the Jefferson River Valley, are the Highlands, East Pioneers, and Pintlers. And if you traverse the plateau to the west, you can see turquoise Beall Lake nestled in an alpine cirque. A more spectacular view would be hard to find in Montana, even in Glacier National Park.

Leaving the peak, the trail traverses the plateau heading north to the saddle separating this plateau from the peak to the north. Follow the cairns from here. The trail begins a steep, switchback descent down Cataract Creek drainage back into timber. A small lake at the headwaters of the creek is immediately below you. About a mile below the saddle, the trail crosses a ridge and gradually descends into the McGovern Creek drainage through stands of whitebark pine, subalpine fir, and spruce. Just before reaching McGovern Creek, the trail back to the South Boulder drainage takes off to the right, while a trail straight ahead goes to Rock Creek Lake. If you cross to McGovern Creek, you have gone too far and will need to backtrack a couple of hundred yards to the proper trail.

From this junction, follow the trail until it meets a road. Follow this old road for the remainder of the hike. It will eventually lead to a ridge between the South Boulder drainage and McGovern Creek. As the road begins to descend the South Boulder drainage, a spur road takes off to the right. Keep to the left and follow the main road down to the South Boulder Road.

The tail comes out on the South Boulder Road about a mile below Mammoth and three mile below the Curly Lake trailhead.

Unfortunately, no area of the Tobacco Roots is protected as wilderness. In fact, under the current Deer Lodge Forest Plan, the entire Curly Lake trail system described here, even the plateau, is open to motorized vehicles. In wet portions of the trail, motorized use is apparent. Conservationists have worked for years to protect some portion of the Tobacco Roots, but have met opposition because of the mining and motorized vehicle use. Currently, the Deer Lodge National Forest is considering a plan to close a portion of the northwest Tobacco Roots surrounding Curly Lake to motorized use. It is hard to think of an area more deserving of wilderness designation.—*Kim Wilson*

HIKE 45 *LAKE LOUISE*

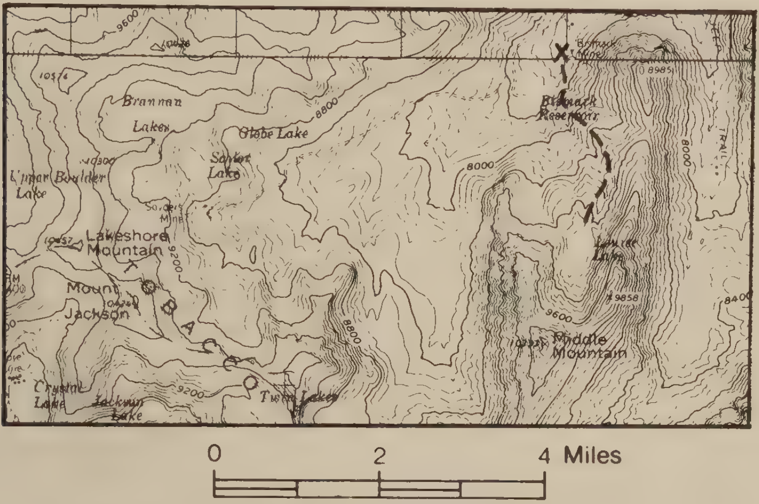
General description: A short but steep overnighter.
General location: 40 miles southeast of Butte in the Tobacco Root Mountains.
Maps: Waterloo USGS Quad and the Deerlodge National Forest Map.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,800 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Jefferson Ranger District, 405 E. Legion, Whitehall, MT 59759, or call (406) 287-3223.

Lake Louise in the Tobacco Root Mountains. Bill Schneider photo.

The hike: The Tobacco Roots aren't well-known for hiking, but the range has much to offer—particularly short hikes suitable for families, such as the one to Lake Louise.

To find the trailhead, turn south off Interstate 90 at the Cardwell exit, thirty-one miles east of Butte. Instead of taking U.S. Highway 10 along the Jefferson River, veer south onto Montana Highway 359. After about four miles, turn right

HIKE 45 *LAKE LOUISE*


Brannan Lake
Globe Lake
Sawtor Lake
Upper Boulder Lake
Lakeshore Mountain
Mount Jackson
Crystal Lake
Jackson Lake
Twin Lakes
Bismark Reservoir
Louise Lake
Middle Mountain
9600
8800
8000
9200
8400
9600
8985
9858
TRAIL
0
2
4 Miles

(southwest) onto South Boulder Road. Stay on this road for about twenty miles, passing a small town named Mammoth. The road gets steadily worse as you proceed, but in dry weather late in the summer, a two-wheel-drive vehicle can make it. The trail leaves South Boulder Road on the left-hand side about five miles past Mammoth and just before Bismark Reservoir. After turning off South Boulder Road, you can park on the west side of the river.

Cross South Boulder on a foot bridge.

After this, the trail (which isn't shown on the topo map) climbs for three long miles to the lake. The elevation gain—2,800 feet—makes it seem longer. Carry your drinking water, as there are only a few water holes along the way.

The lake sits in a cirque with massive, 10,353-foot Middle Mountain to the south. The best campsite is to your left when you hit the lake. Although firewood isn't readily available.

The lake has a small population of large cutthroat trout that can be very fussy about which fly they take. If you find the fly that works, only catch enough for supper, returning the rest for the next angler.

Although the trail is steep, this hike is popular with families. With children, plan on at least three hours to reach the lake—and probably more.

This fine hike has been recognized by the Forest Service as a National Recreation Trail for its outstanding scenery and exceptional recreational opportunities. It's closed year-round to all motorized vehicles.

Climbers in your party will be tempted to scramble up Middle Mountain, a nontechnical climb.—*Bill Schneider*

Humbug Spires

Overview

This unique area doesn't really belong to any particular mountain range. Although the Highland Mountains south of Butte are the closest range. The large granite protrusions give this area its name. The Douglas-fir in this recommended wilderness area shade healthy deer and elk populations.

The Humbug Spires are managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

HIKE 46 *HUMBUG SPIRES*

General description: An easy day hike or overnighter into a unique primitive area.
General location: 26 miles south of Butte in the Humbug Spires Recommended Wilderness.
Maps: Butte South and Melrose USGS Quad and the Bureau of Land Management's Public Lands in Montana-Dillon Map #32.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 1,540 feet.
Season: May through October.
For more information: Write District Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Butte District, Box 3388, 106 N. Parkmont, Butte MT 59702, or call (406) 494-5059.

The hike: Of all the roadless country in Montana, the 11,174-acre Humbug Spires area must rank among the most intriguing. Besides the granite protrusions for which it was named, the area has a lovely, trout-laden stream (small cutthroat) and a forest of primeval Douglas-fir somehow overlooked by early timber cutters.

After driving south of Butte for twenty-six miles, turn left (east) at the Moose Creek interchange. Drive for three miles up the Moose Creek Road to the BLM parking lot. The trail begins here.

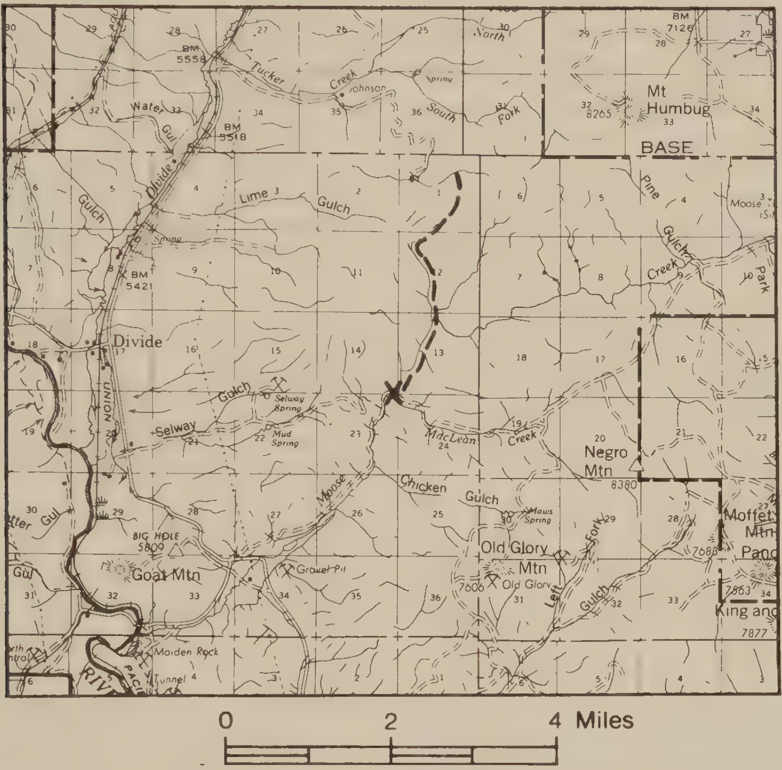
After leaving the parking area, you cross a footbridge to the west side of Moose Creek, where there is a BLM sign announcing the primitive area and notifying recreationists that motorized vehicles aren't allowed. In the first 1.3 miles, you pass by numerous ancient trees, possibly two hundred years old or older.

At about the 1.5-mile mark, the trail forks. Take the right fork and continue up the east side of the stream, skirting a section of private land. Be sure to respect the landowner's desire to close his land to the public.

Stay on this trail for about a third of a mile, when it will begin to peter out at a point where you'll have good views of the Humbug Spires in all their majesty. Game trails proliferate here, so, accompanied by topo map and compass, you can plot your own route.

Although this is usually a day hike, you can camp along the stream just before you climb out of the gulch. You could also camp on the ridge—if you think

HIKE 46 *HUMBUG SPIRES*


Mt Humbug
BASE
Lime Gulch
Tucker Creek
Johnson
South Fork
North
Divide
Selway Gulch
Selway Spring
Mud Spring
McLean Creek
Negro Mtn
8380
Chicken Gulch
Moose
Maws Spring
Old Glory Mtn
Old Glory
Left Fork Gulch
Goat Mtn
BIG HOLE 5809
Gravel Pit
Maiden Rock
Tunnel
Pine Gulch Creek
Park
Moffet Mtn
King and
UNION
BM 5558
BM 5518
BM 5421
BM 7126
8265
7606
7688
7877
0
2
4 Miles

the scenery pays for the extra work of hauling water up from the stream.

If you camp, plan on spending the first half of your second day wandering around among the spires. You'll come home exclaiming about the beauty and uniqueness of the Humbug Spires.—*Herb B. Gloege*

The Snowcrest Range

Overview

The Snowcrest Range includes a twenty-mile-long series of magnificent mountain parks stretching from Snowcrest Mountain in the north to Antone Peak in the south. Expansive meadows bordered by aspen groves, stunted conifers, and sagebrush reach from the these 10,000-foot peaks to the national forest boundaries below.

The Snowcrest Range is one of southwest Montana's best kept secrets, with excellent habitat for golden eagles and elk. With an estimated 2,000 head of elk, this is a sportsman's paradise. It is sad that the Snowcrests have been overlooked by past wilderness bills.

HIKE 47 *SNOWCREST TRAIL*

General description: A 20-mile loop hike along the top of the Snowcrest Range.
General location: 40 miles southeast of Dillon.
Maps: Antone Peak and Stonehouse Mountain USGS Quads, and the Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: High alpine scenery on the crest of the Snowcrests.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 3,415 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,415 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Sheridan Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, Box 428, Sheridan, MT 59749, or call (406) 842-5432.

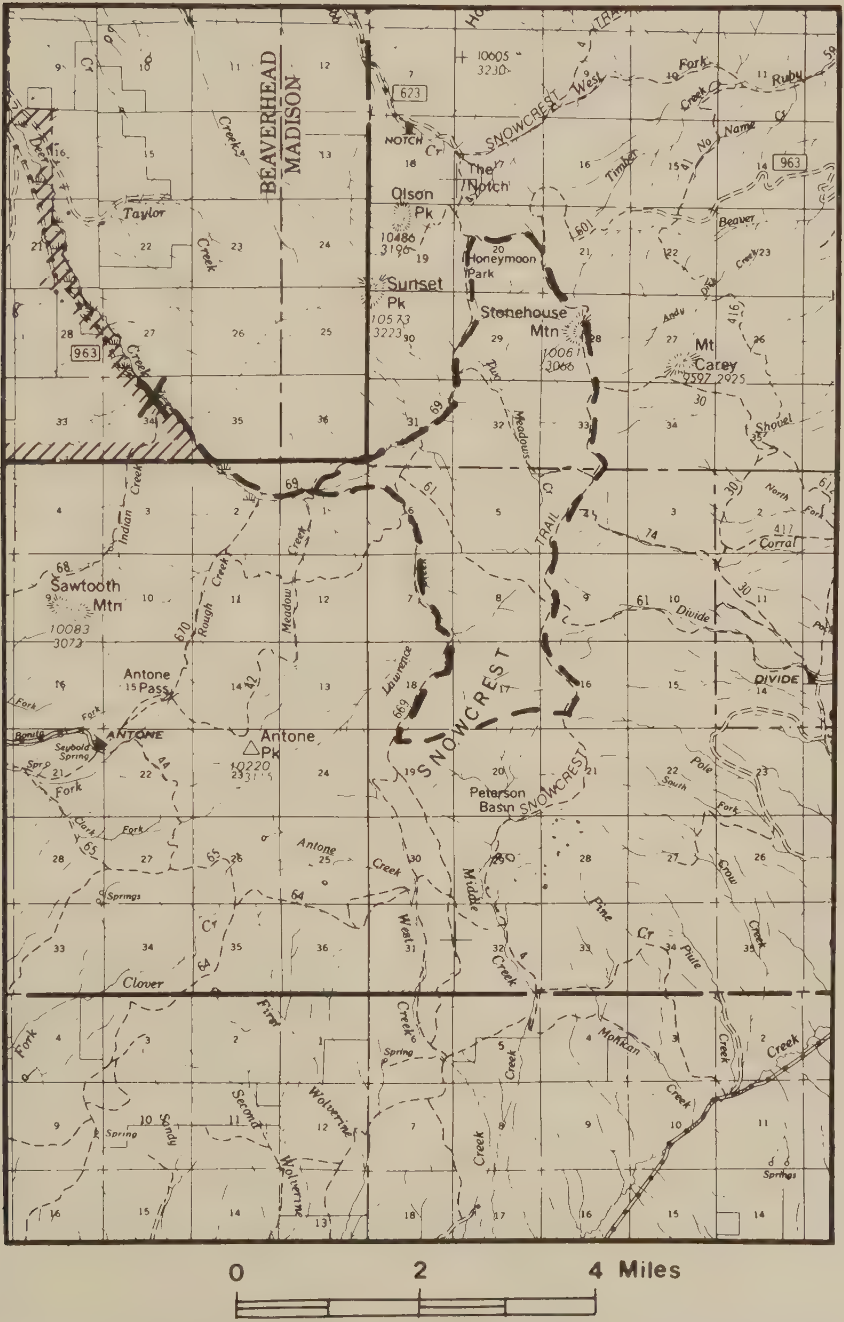
The hike: The Snowcrest Range stretches for twenty miles north to south right next to the Gravellys in the far southwestern corner of Montana. This hike will take you along eight miles of the southern portion of the crest of the range, mostly at elevations higher than 9,500 feet. Make sure to check in with the Forest Service about snow conditions if you are attempting the hike before mid-July.

After leaving Interstate 15 at Dillon, look for the Blacktail Deer Road, which heads eastward just south of Western Montana State College. Nine miles east of Dillon, the pavement ends, but continue on the gravel road for another eighteen miles. At this point, turn left at the sign indicating the road to the East Fork of Blacktail Creek and the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Winter Game Range. The trailhead is ten miles farther down this road.

From the trailhead, you'll want to follow the East Fork of Blacktail Deer Creek Trail #69 to Honeymoon Park on the Snowcrest Divide. Here at another trail intersection, take the right fork (Trail #4), which leads to Honeymoon Park.

The next eight miles of hiking are all along the Snowcrest Divide, on the

HIKE 47 *SNOWCREST TRAIL*


BEAVERHEAD
MADISON
10605
3230
623
NOTCH
Cr
SNOWCREST
West
Fork
Ruby
Creek
No Name
Cr
963
The Notch
Olson Pk
10486
3196
Timber
Beaver
Creek
Taylor
Creek
Deer
Creek
963
Honeymoon Park
Sunset Pk
10573
3223
Stonehouse Mtn
10061
3066
601
Andy
Mt Carey
9597 2925
416
Shovel
Meadows
Cr
TRAIL
69
61
North
Fork
417
Corral
74
30
Indian
Creek
68
Sawtooth Mtn
10083
3073
670
Rough
Creek
Meadow
Creek
Lawrence
61
Divide
DIVIDE
Antone Pass
ANTONE
Bonita
Seybold Spring
Fork
669
SNOWCREST
Antone Pk
10220
3115
44
Peterson Basin
SNOWCREST
Pole
South
Fork
Clark
65
Antone
Creek
Crow
Springs
64
West
Middle
Creek
Pine
Cr
Pole
Creek
Clover
Fork
Fir
Creek
Spring
Creek
Mohan
Creek
Creek
Second
Wolverine
Sandy
Spring
Wolverine
Springs
0
2
4 Miles

Snowcrest Trail. Stonehouse Mountain is the highest point near the trail at 10,075 feet. Look for the small stone hut built by shepherds.

The views in all directions are impressive, but this stretch has a major problem: lack of water. This is especially problematic later in the season. If you go early in July, snowbanks may linger, and they can be a source of water. Otherwise, you can drop down off the crest into the heads of drainages to find water or settle for a dry camp.

Large cirque basins hug the eastern side of the crest, as the trail skirts several minor summits along the divide, always remaining above 9,500 feet. At the fifth trail intersection since leaving Honeymoon Park, some 5.5 miles ago, the main Snowcrest Trail continues southward and drops down into Peterson Basin. Take the right fork to the west toward Antone Peak. This portion of trail is not marked on Forest Service maps, but it's present on the USGS topo.

About a mile before reaching Antone Peak, the trail splits again. Follow the northern trail down Lawrence Creek, which leads to the main East Fork Blacktail Creek Trail that you started on.

Elk, deer, moose, mountain goats, and a few black bears are all inhabitants of the Snowcrest Country, but the fishing is poor except for the main East Fork of Blacktail Deer Creek.

This trip might impress you enough to interest you in other hiking possibilities throughout this small but interesting mountain range.—*Bob Wagenknecht and Ed Madej*

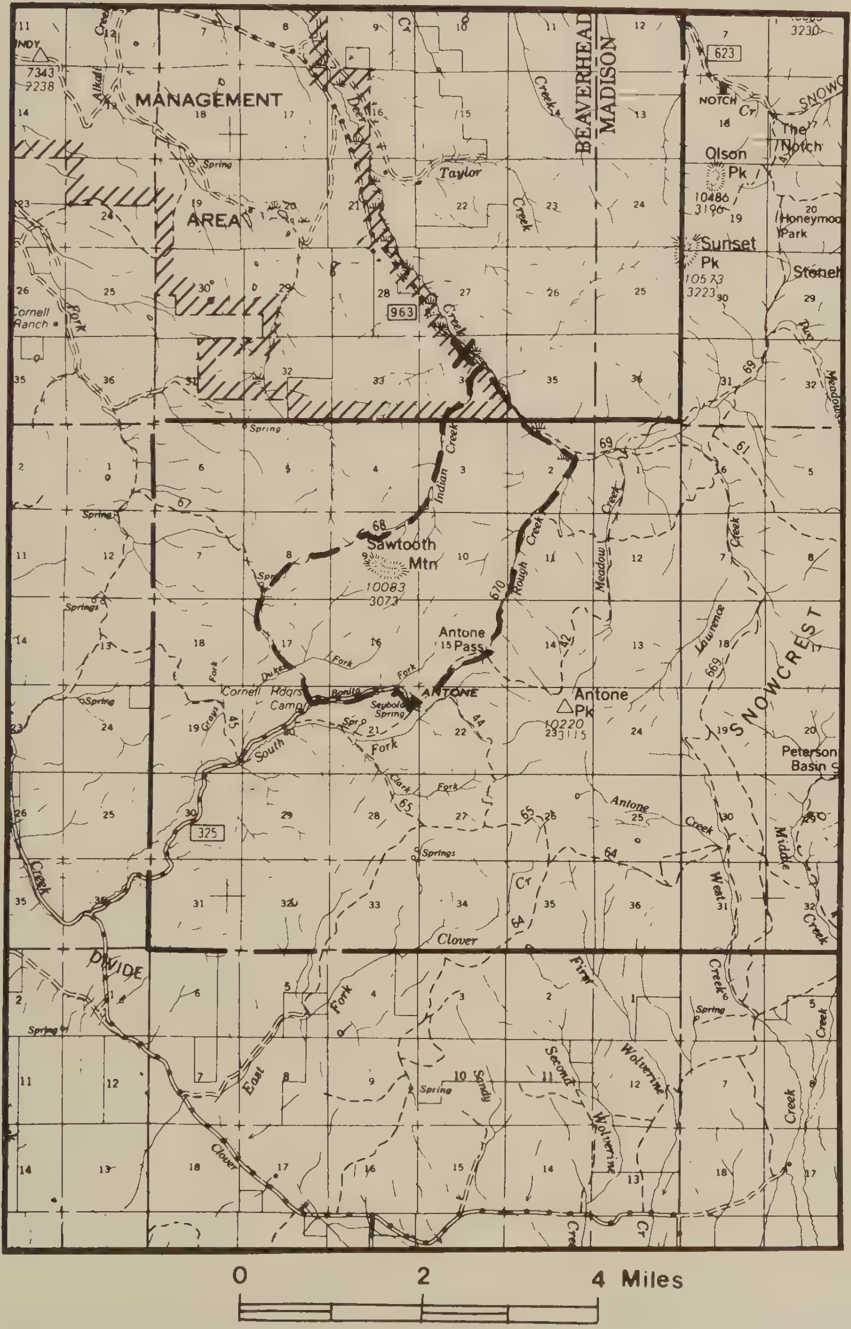
HIKE 48 *SAWTOOTH MOUNTAIN, ANTONE PASS*

General description: A 12-mile overnight loop hike through some little-known country.
General location: 40 miles southeast of Dillon.
Maps: Antone Peak USGS Quad and the Beaverhead National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Interesting alpine country among the 10,000-foot peaks of the Snowcrest Range.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,910 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Sheridan Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, Box 428, Sheridan, MT 59749, or call (406) 842-5432. You can also contact the Resource Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Ibey Building, 1005 Selway Drive, Dillon, MT 59724, or call (406) 683-2337.

The hike: Few people have ever heard of the Snowcrest Range. That's all the more reason to try one of the hikes in this little-visited but scenic area.

Turn off Interstate 15 at the Dillon interchange and drive into town. Just south of Western Montana State College, look for the Blacktail Deer Road, which takes off to the east. The pavement ends nine miles east of Dillon. Continue along the gravel road for another eighteen miles, while keeping an eye open for signs pointing to the East Fork of Blacktail Deer Creek and the

HIKE 48 *SAWTOOTH MOUNTAIN, ANTONE PASS*


MANAGEMENT
AREA
7343
2238
Alkali
Cornell Ranch
Fork
Spring
Taylor
Creek
Deer
963
BEAVERHEAD
MADISON
623
NOTCH
Cr
SNOWC
The Notch
Olson Pk
10486
3196
Honeymoo Park
Sunset Pk
10573
3223
Stonel
Meadows
69
61
67
68
Indian Creek
Sawtooth Mtn
10083
3073
670
Rough Creek
Meadow Creek
Antone Pass
Lawrence Creek
669
SNOWCREST
Antone Pk
10220
3115
Cornell Hdqrs Camp
Bonito
Seybold Spring
ANTONE
Duke
Fork
Grays
South Fork
Clark Fork
45
65
44
64
42
325
Springs
Antone Creek
West Creek
Middle Creek
Peterson Basin
Clover
DIVIDE
First
East Fork
Second
Sandy
Wolverine
Clover
0
2
4 Miles

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Winter Game Range. Turn left up the East Fork and drive ten miles more to the trailhead.

Sawtooth Trail #68 leads up Indian Creek to the southwest of the trailhead. Climbing steeply out of the creek bottom, the trail gains a shoulder at 9,300 feet on the north slope of Sawtooth Mountain, offering magnificent views of Sawtooth's jagged north face.

The trail continues for about a mile on the high northern slope of Sawtooth before dropping down to a trail intersection and a series of springs. The springs may be the best water source along this entire twelve-mile loop, as well as a good camping spot.

From the springs, the trail is now called the Cornell Trail, and it leads to Cornell Camp, an abandoned grazing headquarters on the South Fork of the West Fork of Blacktail Deer Creek. Here you'll have to walk eastward up a gravel road for one mile to the Antone Guard Station and the trail to Antone Pass.

It's now possible to drive directly to the Antone Guard Station and hike the loop from there. The gravel road (#325) was reconstructed in 1987, and a trailhead was established at Antone with a parking area, unloading ramp, and hitch rack.

Leaving the guard station, Trail #670 leads to 8,600-foot Antone Pass and a pretty place to camp, if you can find water. A steep but worthwhile side trip from the pass follows a trail toward the southeast. This trail eventually bends away from the 10,247-foot summit of Antone Peak, but a short bit of scrambling will bring you to the top. The view here includes the rest of the Snowcrest Range stretching off to the north, the expanse of the Red Rock Valley, and the Centennial Mountains on the southern horizon.

Dropping down from Antone Pass, it's 2.5 miles along Rough Creek until the trail intersects with the main East Fork of Blacktail Deer Creek Trail. Turn left on this route and hike the 1.5 miles back to your car.

Wildlife may be plentiful along this hike. Blacktail Deer Creek is home to a large elk herd, and mountain goats are found on many of the high peaks. With cattle possibly in the South Fork area, make sure to treat your water (always a good idea) unless you travel early enough in the season (early July) to make use of snowfields.

There's some fishing for cutthroat and brown trout in the East Fork, but the rest of the streams along the way are too small to support much of a fishery.

The lower reaches of the East Fork of Blacktail Deer Creek were studied by the Bureau of Land Management in their wilderness study process, and, in general, the area had a high wilderness rating.—*Bob Wagenknecht and Ed Madej*

The Mission Mountains

Overview

Wilderness advocates want low-elevation additions to this incredible wilderness to protect grizzly bear habitat. The Missions are probably as far south as grizzlies now live, discounting Yellowstone. Also, additional wilderness may be required to save the rare bull trout, which depends on the Elk Creek drainage for spawning. Though even without any additions, the Mission Mountains Wilderness is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. The wilderness is on the cutting edge of low-impact use and wildlands preservation. The trails in the Missions are used heavily, but the level of wildness maintained is surprising.

The Mission Mountains are wedged between the ancient glacier formed Flathead Lake Valley, separating the Swan Valley and the Flathead Indian Reservation. These peaks are not as high as some in Montana, but the contrast above the treeline is unmatched by any other range in the state. The Mission Mountains are easy to love and hard to stay away from.

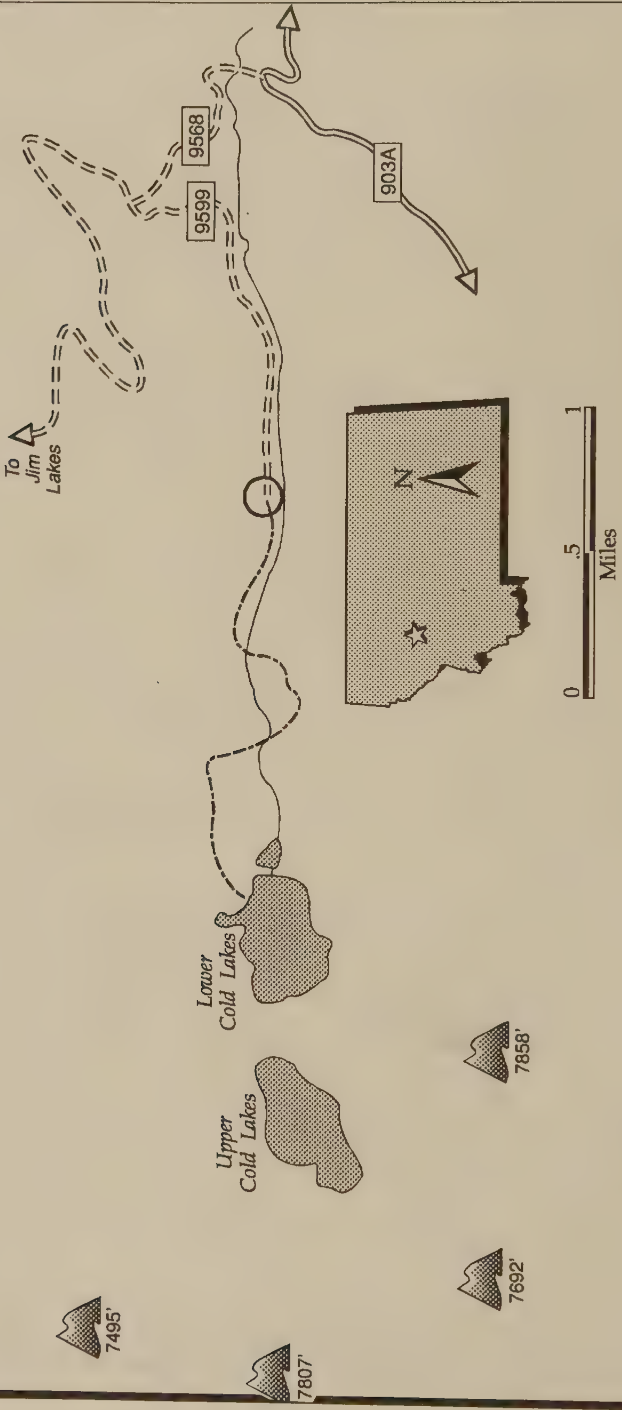
HIKE 49 COLD LAKES

General description: A day hike for fishing and experiencing the Missions.
General location: In the Missions south of Swan Lake.
Maps: Piper-Crow Pass and Peck Lake USGS Quads and Flathead National Forest Map.
Special attractions: Views of Mission Mountains and Cutthroat Trout.
Difficulty: Easy, Moderate to upper lake.
Elevation gain: 753 ft.
Season: Mid-June through August.
Information: District Ranger, Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, P.O. Box 370, Big Fork, MT 59911, or call (406) 837-5081.

The hike: This hike is an example of the positive changes taking place in the wilderness even with increased use. Lower Cold lake had been severely damaged by years of high-impact camping. With the Mission Mountains Wilderness designation the Forest Service has made an effort to help areas like Cold Lakes recover from past abuses. This Wilderness Restoration Project has been a success so far. Native vegetation has regrown over old campsites. If you want to camp, the trailhead is your best bet. Camping is not allowed within 0.25 miles of either lake. It is a nightmare to find a suitable campsite that distance away. The brush is too thick, and there are few flat spots to put up a tent.

To find the trailhead, drive south of Swan Lake on Montana Highway 83 for twenty-three miles and turn right on Cold Creek Road 903. Drive southwest on Forest Road 903 for three miles and turn right on Forest Road 9568 and left on Forest Road 9599. It is seven miles to the trailhead from MT 83. Much

HIKE 49 *COLD LAKES*


9568
9599
903A
To Jim Lakes
N
0
.5
1
Miles
Lower Cold Lakes
Upper Cold Lakes
7858'
7692'
7495'
7807'

Cold Lakes in Mission Mountains. Russ Schneider photo.

of this area is Plum Creek land and new roads may be built and old roads closed. Check with District Rangers before departing.

Trail #121 for Cold Lakes is 1.5 miles long. It climbs along the stream and sometimes in the stream to the lake. About 0.5 miles up the trail on the right is a cascading waterfall. A small path veers off to the right for a closer look. Get back on the left, main, trail for Cold Lakes.

Two log crossings along the way are fairly narrow. Although flattened slightly with an axe, they are probably not suitable for very young children. Also, this is bear country so make plenty of noise. For more information on bears read the section on hiking in bear country at the front of the guide. After 1.5 miles on the trail, you will reach lower Cold Lake. There is a roped off vegetation recovery area here and a nice log to sit on and rest. The fishing is good, but good casting spots are scarce. The shore of the lake is covered with dense foliage. The easy hike ends here if you choose to turn around and hike out.

There is a faint path to the upper lake. It circles the north side of the lake and follows the stream up to the upper lake. The hard part is getting around the lake. Thick brush and deadfall cover the trail. Some of the fallen Englemann spruce are four feet high. Crawling over, around, and under the fallen trees is exhausting. Some have suggested that this trail should be maintained, but having a bush-whacking barrier minimizes the impact of hikers on the upper lake. Not as many people get there as would if the trail was maintained.

Once you make it around the lower lake to the inlet, it gets easier. The stretch between the lakes is fairly gentle. The outlet of the upper lake is a log jam. If you choose to cross it or fish from it be careful of unstable logs. The fishing is better at the upper lake. Twelve-inch cutthroat trout are common and more casting spots are available. If you plan to keep fish, pack fish out whole and clean them after you get out—minimizing human and bear encounters. Fish viscera may attract bears to the lake shore.

The view from the upper lake is breathtaking. The glaciated peaks of the Missions are sharp and rugged, carved from uplifted sedimentary rock. The surrounding cliffs offer a home to mountain goats, which are more wild than on Logan Pass. Bring your binoculars and have a look.

The return hike retraces your original path. This is a relaxing day hike if you take your time.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 50 *MOLLMAN LAKES*

General description: A tough 8-mile, overnight or multi-night trip for experienced hikers in the wild Mission Mountains.
General location: In the Missions south of Swan Lake.
Maps: Mount Harding, Hemlock Lake, and Peck Lake USGS Quads and Flathead National Forest Map.
Special attractions: Views of the Mission Mountains and Elk Creek valley.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 53 ft.
Season: July through August.
Information: District Ranger, Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, P.O. Box 370, Big Fork, MT 59911, or call (406) 857-5081.

Mollman Lakes Trial. Russ Schneider photo.

Near Mollman Lakes in the Mission Mountains. Russ Schneider photo.

The hike: This hike is challenging and offers wilderness along lesser traveled paths. Much of the hike is cross-country on an old and unmaintained trail. Do not attempt this hike without good compass and map skills. Also, the valley is good grizzly bear habitat. Refer to the section in this guide on "Hiking in Bear Country."

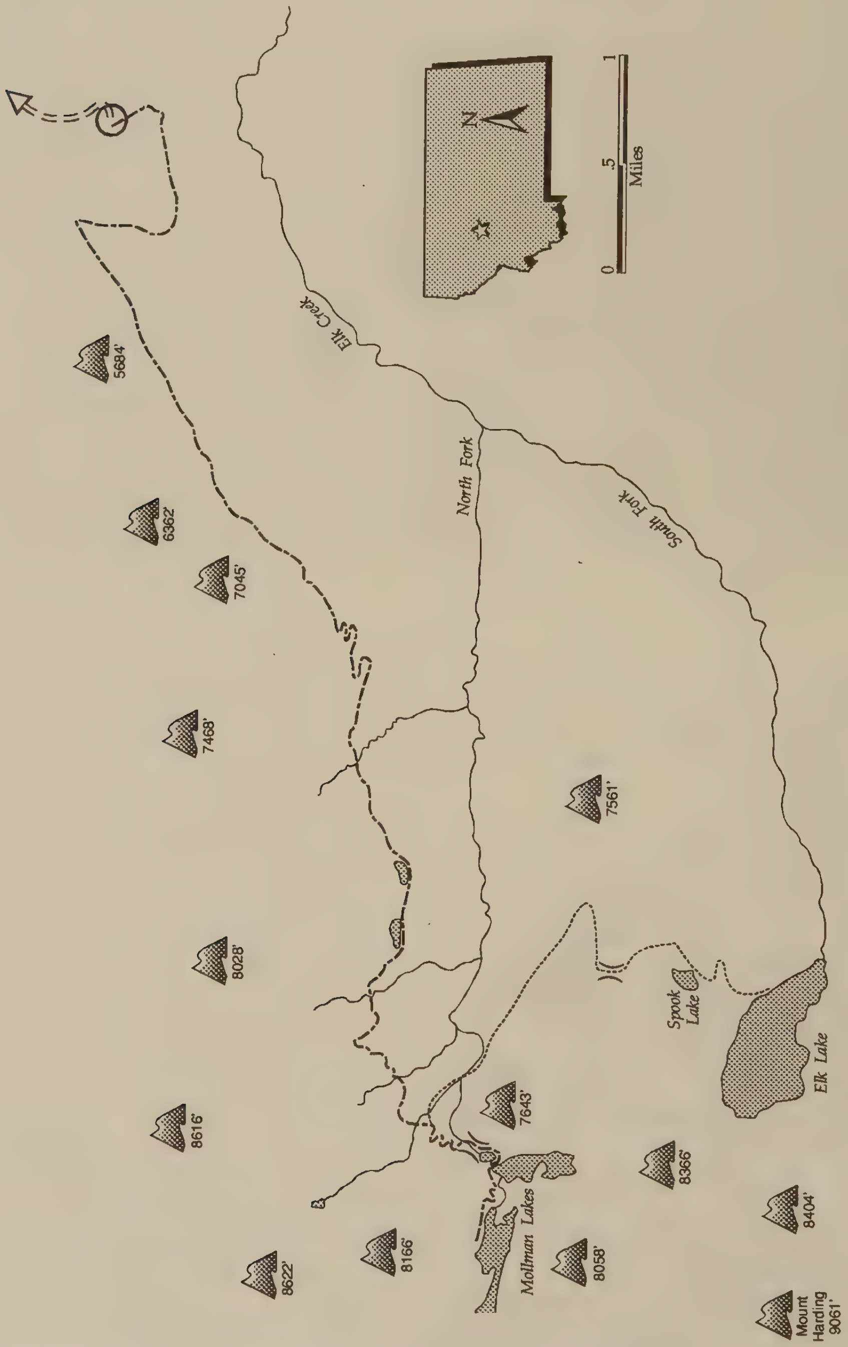
The beauty of this area is striking—the lush Elk Creek valley is surrounded by cirques and waterfalls. At Mollman Lakes, the surrounding cliffs capture the late evening sun on their walls.

To reach the trailhead, drive south of Swan Lake on Montana Highway 83 for about twenty-three miles and turn right (west) on Forest Road 903. Check your odometer and drive southwest on FR 903 for three miles and turn left on to Forest Road 903A, continue 3.2 miles, and turn right (6.2 miles from the highway) on Forest Road 10291. At mile 7.8, turn right again on another forest road and go one more mile to the trailhead (8.8 miles from the highway). Much of the area surrounding the forest roads is owned by Plumb Creek Timber Company. Roads may be closed or new roads may be built, so you should check with the district ranger office before departing.

The trailhead is not marked or numbered but does have a registration box. No restrooms are available at the parking area. The trail begins as an old road, and the first three miles are a gradual uphill grade through lush boreal forest. The area has thick underbrush, including devils club. When wet, this area will soak a hiker rubbing against the undergrowth; rain gear is helpful in these conditions.

Take Elk Creek Trail #300 as it forks off the road to the right. The Elk Creek Trail curves north for one mile. Then turn left up the ridge on Trail #301. Soon

HIKE 50 MOLLMAN LAKES


N
0
.5
1
Miles
Elk Creek
North Fork
South Fork
5684'
6362'
7045'
7468'
7561'
8028'
8616'
7643'
Spook Lake
Elk Lake
8366'
8404'
8622'
8166'
Mollman Lakes
8058'
Mount Harding 9061'

Mollman Lakes, Mission Mountains. Russ Schneider photo.

after the intersection, you will cross the wilderness boundary. The trail here has been maintained and climbs gradually for another 2.5 miles. About 0.5 mile more, or three miles from the trailhead, the trail splits. Take the left fork. The right fork goes to the south fork of Cold Creek lakes. Following the left fork trail, climb steeply to the top of the ridge. For the first time the valley below is visible, and the Missions look deceivingly high in elevation.

Shortly after reaching the top of the ridge, the trail is no longer maintained. This is the end of the constructed and maintained trail. The Forest Service has opted for passive management in this area and does not promote the use of the trail. But the remaining path is a remnant of an old packer trail used for passage through Mollman Pass and is still used by horseback riders. Pick your route carefully, especially at several meadows where the trail seems to disappear. The trail drops into the valley on an extremely steep grade for about a mile, a strenuous climb on the way out. The trail follows a contour up the north slope of the valley, heading west. There is one major stream crossing where the trail is hard to follow. Wade the stream and look for blazes on the other side.

Continue up the valley, which is mostly flat with a slight uphill grade, then climb a ridge before reaching the headwaters of North Fork Elk Creek. From the ridge, the landscape before you is gray cliffs and the green saddle that leads to Mollman Lakes. Waterfalls flowing from lower Mollman lake spray white cascades over the far slope. Few combinations of rocks, trees, and water could match the beauty of this picture.

The trail descends for a quarter mile to the valley and Mollman Meadows. Here the trail to Elk and Spook lakes veers off to the left (south) along the creek. Along this stream are several good campsites, perfect for locating a base camp to explore both Mollman and Elk and Spook lakes. This area is fragile so leave no trace. Camping here also saves you from carrying your pack up the last half mile to Mollman Lakes, a section that seems straight up.

After crossing North Fork Elk Creek, the trail switchbacks up toward the saddle. This steep climb seems extra difficult after traveling 7.5 miles already. The trail in some places is very rocky, but there is evidence that horses have climbed this section. Cross the creek once on slick rock. You will forget about your wet feet when you reach the saddle and see the sweeping view of the Elk Creek valley. This is prime habitat for grizzly bears and elk.

Anglers will be happy to know that Mollman Lakes have cutthroat trout. There are three lakes with small creeks connecting them. The lower one is the smallest but still offers good fishing. Between the lowest lake and the middle lake is a small waterfall. Next to this waterfall is an old campsite designated for wilderness restoration. Please don't camp here. There are many other good campsites around both lakes. Between the middle and upper lakes are several more good spots. A short section of creek separates the next lake, which offers views of Mollman Pass.

No trace camping is important to preserve the pristine nature of the lakes and the surrounding area. Although these lakes receive fewer visitors than some in the Missions, seeing another party on weekends is likely. This increased use makes preservation more difficult, so be extra careful when camping.

On the return hike, remember to carry water for the last ascent. Navigating the trail should be easier on the way out.—*Russ Schneider*

Swan Mountains-Jewel Basin Area

Overview

The Swan Range, towering above the Flathead, Swan, and Clearwater river valleys, provides the scenic backdrop for tens of thousands of residents and nearly a million annual visitors to northwestern Montana. This rugged band of mountains, with streams cascading into the Swan river, South Fork of the Flathead, and the Flathead Valley wetlands, is the westernmost extension of the contiguous Bob Marshall System. Recreationists will find seclusion in alpine meadows, at dozens of waterfalls, and more than seventy-five jewel-like lakes.

This corridor is essential grizzly bear habitat for bears migrating to the Missions. The Forest Service ranks the Swan Range as one of the nation's highest quality areas for inclusion in the wilderness system. Portions of the Swan-Jewel have been included in every wilderness bill.

The Swan Range includes the Jewel Basin Hiking Area. A hikers paradise filled with alpine lakes and trails. Horses and all motorized vehicles are prohibited in the area.

HIKE 51 *MORRELL FALLS*

General description: A fairly easy, 5-mile round trip for any hiker.
General location: 10 miles north of Seeley Lake.
Maps: Morrell Lake USGS Quad and the Lolo National Forest Map for the eastern half of the forest.
Special attractions: Large waterfalls, small lakes.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 250 feet.
Season: Mid-May through October.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Box 717, Seeley Lake, MT 59868, or call (406) 677-2233.

The hike: Morrell Falls is a series of large cascades that drop about one hundred feet. In winter, it qualifies as one of Montana's larger icicles. The Forest Service has designated the route to the falls as a National Recreation Trail. **See map on page 144.**

To find the trailhead, turn east onto the Cottonwood Lakes Road a quarter-mile north of Seeley Lake. Go for slightly more than a mile, take a left on the Morrell-Clearwater Road, and drive seven miles. Then hang a right, cross the bridge over Morrell Creek, and take a left at the next junction. From here, it's one mile to the trailhead.

The trail is mostly flat and wanders 2.5 miles through open lodgepole stands. There's only one short, steep stretch and a few streams to cross (most of which are bridged). About a quarter-mile from the falls, you'll pass Morrell Lake, a handy place to swim, but the Forest Service discourages camping here, due to overuse of the one small site.

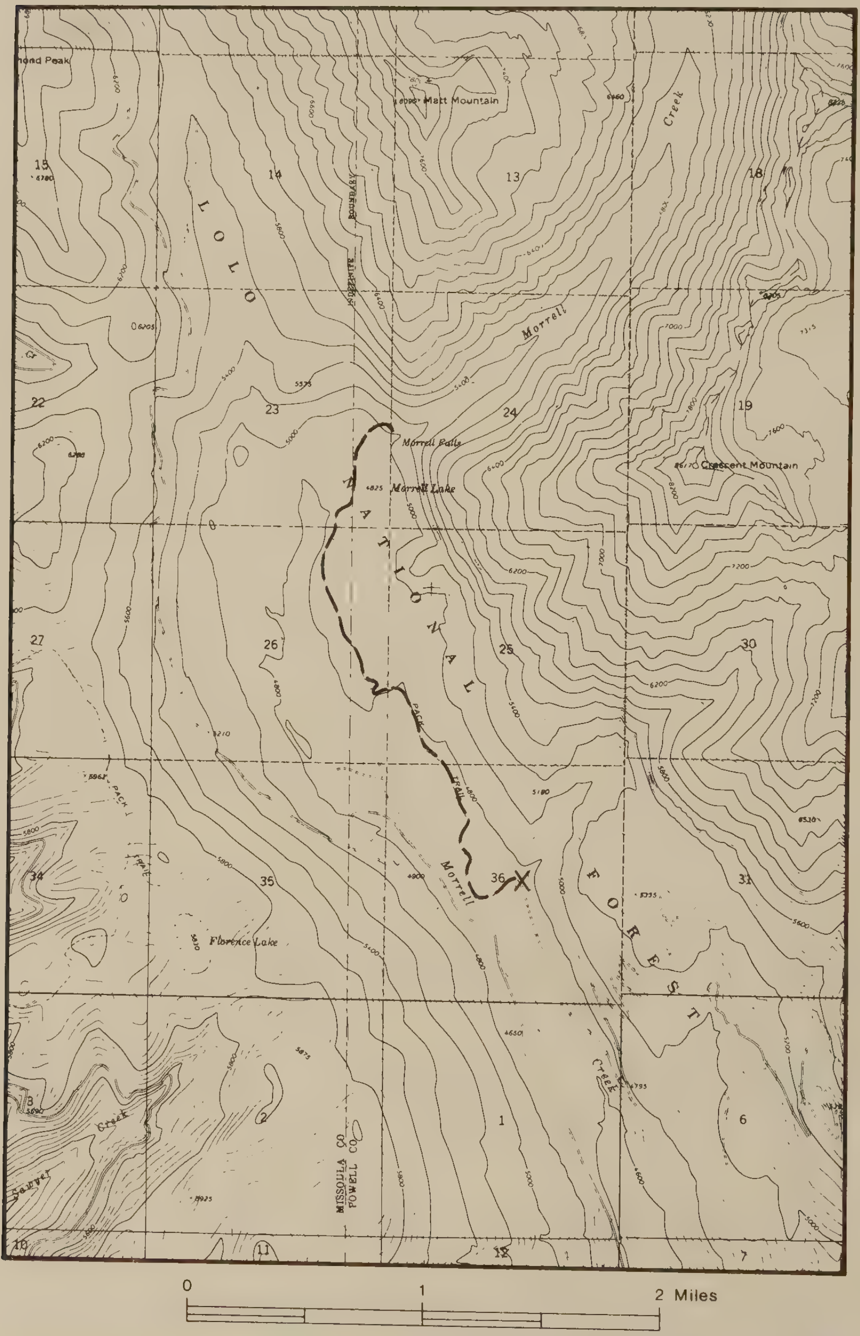
The main trail goes to the lower falls. But there's a steep subsidiary trail (which leaves the main trail just before it reaches the falls) that offers more viewpoints of the falls. After climbing to the upper falls, this subsidiary trail leads back into Grizzly Basin, a portion of the Swan Range recommended by the Forest Service as an addition to the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

The trail is generally free of snow mid-May through October. And there's enough drinking water. June is the best time to feed the mosquitoes, or you can shoot them for sport. They're as overwhelming as the volume of water coming over the falls, so don't forget your repellent.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 52 *SAPPHIRE LAKE*

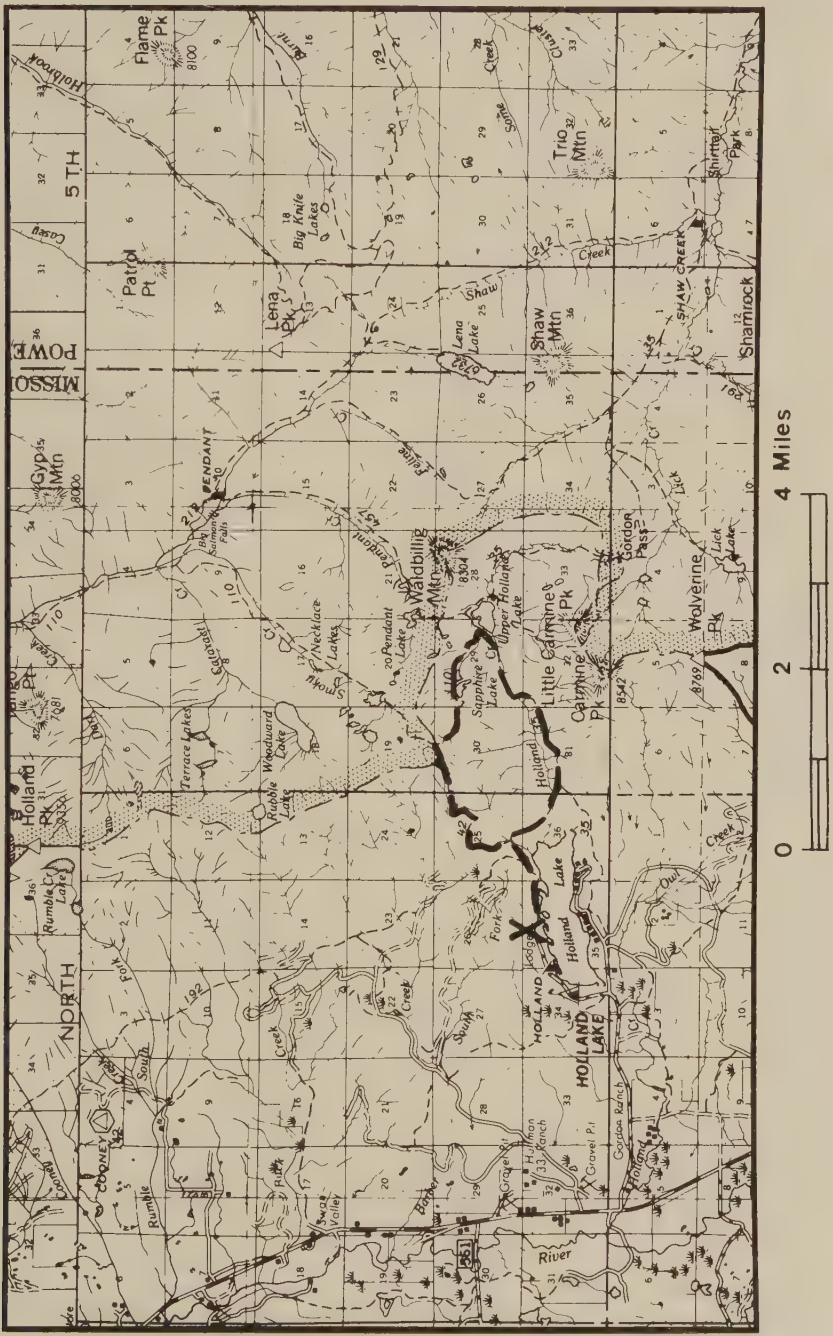
General description: A short, steep hike to a high alpine lake in the wild Swan Range.
General location: 20 miles north of Seeley Lake.
Maps: Holland Lake USGS Quad and the Flathead National Forest Map, south half.
Special attractions: Spectacular views of the Swan Range and the Mission Mountains.

HIKE 51 *MORRELL FALLS*



Matt Mountain
Crescent Mountain
Morrell Falls
Morrell Lake
Florence Lake
LOLO NATIONAL FOREST
Morrell Creek
Morrell
PACK TRAIL
Sawyer Creek
MISSOULA CO
POWELL CO
BOUNDARY
0
1
2 Miles

HIKE 52 *SAPPHIRE LAKE*


Flame Pk
8100
Patrol Pt
Lena Pk
Big Knife Lakes
Trio Mtn
Shaw Mtn
Lena Lake
Shaw Creek
Shamrock
Shirttail Park
5 TH
MISSOURI POWER
Gyp Mtn
8006
PENDANT
Big Salmon Falls
Necklace Lakes
Pendant Lake
Waldbillig Mtn
8304
Upper Holland Lake
Little Carmine Pk
Carmine Pk
8542
Sapphire Lake
Gordon Pass
Lick Lake
Wolverine Pk
8769
Holland Pk
Rumble Cr Lake
Terrace Lakes
Woodward Lake
Rubble Lake
Tango Pt
NORTH
COONEY
Swan Valley
HOLLAND LAKE
Holland Lake
Holland Lodge
Gordon Ranch
Gravel Pit
Owl Creek
River
Holland
South Fork
Rumble
Barber
Creek
Lick Creek
Holbrook
Smoky
Pendant
Cataract
Holland
Clark
Some Creek
Casey
83
0
2
4 Miles

Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 4,000 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, P.O. Box 370, Bigfork, MT 59911, or call (406) 837-5081.

The hike: Although hordes of people use the main trail up Holland Creek as a major access route into the Bob Marshall Wilderness, far fewer hikers bother to climb past Sapphire Lake and take the old trail that used to serve the old Holland fire lookout. The 4,000-foot elevation gain in eight miles may discourage some people, but the scenery is definitely worth it.

Drive north from Seeley Lake for about twenty miles on Montana Highway 83 and turn east onto Holland Lake Road, which leads eventually to the trailhead.

The hike can be done as a twelve-mile loop day hike, or you can camp overnight at Sapphire Lake. If you want to avoid the traffic on the main Holland Trail and you enjoy climbing steep switchbacks, the trip can be done as an up and back on Trail #42. This description will focus on the loop hike done in a counterclockwise direction.

Start up the main East Holland Connector Trail #415, which leads through dense forest for a mile and begins to climb the grade into the Swan Range. In a mile, a trail sign will indicate the steep Holland lookout trail leading to the Necklace Lakes and Sapphire Lake, taking off uphill to the left. You'll descend this path on the way back to lower Holland Lake.

Continuing along the main trail, the route cuts across steep side hills, which offer beautiful views of lower Holland Lake, the Swan Valley, and the Mission Mountains.

The roar of waterfalls becomes overwhelming as the path passes above Holland Falls. Another trail leads to the base of the falls and takes off from the main trail back near the trailhead. Trail #415 crosses Holland Creek and climbs to the junction with Holland Gordon Trail #35 on the south side of the canyon. As the trail climbs parallel to Holland Creek, several other falls and cascades appear, as the stream rushes down the abrupt western slope of the Swan Range. In late June, the thunder of the stream will be almost deafening and will almost drown out the buzzing of early-season mosquitoes. Take care crossing the narrow footlogs over Holland Creek during high water.

Six miles from the trailhead, the trail reaches Upper Holland Lake, situated in a gorgeous subalpine basin beneath the crest of the Swan Range. The trail to Sapphire Lake leads upward from the north shore of the lake, passing through sparse stands of spruce and fir and meadows filled with glacier lilies. For the next three miles, the trail is a hiker's delight, with views opening up to the south along the Swan Range and distant vistas of huge mountains appearing to the east, deep within the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

A mile from Upper Holland Lake, the trail reaches the rumpled plateau on which several ponds, including Sapphire Lake, are located. If you plan to camp here before July 4, you may end up pitching a tent on a snowfield.

After leaving the upper basin above Sapphire Lake, the trail ascends a steep slope to a notch in a high ridge. Once through the notch, the trail continues along a south-facing slope, with the great pyramid of Carmine Peak rising over the deep canyon of Holland Creek below you. This spectacular skywalk through the alpine meadows on the western slope of the Swan Range brings

This hoary marmot, though not as common as its cousin, the yellow-bellied marmot, is still often seen in certain high-country hiking areas. Harry Engels photo.

you almost to eyeball level with the Mission Mountains peaks across the valley.

A sign indicates the old Holland Lookout Trail climbing the ridge to the north. If you have time and energy, this is a very worthwhile side trip. But if you're satisfied with the view you've already gotten, continue down the endless switchbacks toward lower Holland Lake. Three miles on the trail from Sapphire Lake and another mile on the main trail will bring you back to the trailhead and the completion of the loop.

The Holland Trail is the second busiest access route into the Bob Marshall Wilderness (Benchmark in the Rocky Mountain Front is the busiest), so the main trail can get crowded at times. To avoid the hordes, try the loop as early in the season as snow conditions will allow. Once off the main drag and onto the Sapphire Trail, the crowds drop off dramatically.

The mosquitoes in the Swan are well known for their voraciousness. Bring lots of bug dope or a small handgun to keep them under control.

All of this hike is outside the western boundary of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, but it's been proposed as an addition.—*Ed Madej and Rosemary Rowe*

HIKE 53 *LION CREEK*

General description: A variety of backcountry hiking possibilities up Lion Creek Canyon in the wild Swan Range.
General location: 40 miles southeast of Kalispell, just northeast of Condon.
Maps: Swan Peak and Sunburst Lake USGS Quads, and the Flathead National Forest Map (south half).
Special attraction: A grove of old growth western red cedars.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 3,400 feet.
Elevation loss: 145 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, P.O. Box 370, Bigfork, MT 59911, or call (406) 837-5081.

The hike: In contrast with most hiking in the rugged Swan Range, the trail up Lion Creek climbs gradually up from the Swan Valley to the large basin beneath the Swan Divide. As a result, Lion Creek offers fine day hiking opportunities for families or more extensive two- or three-day trips for more adventuresome hikers.

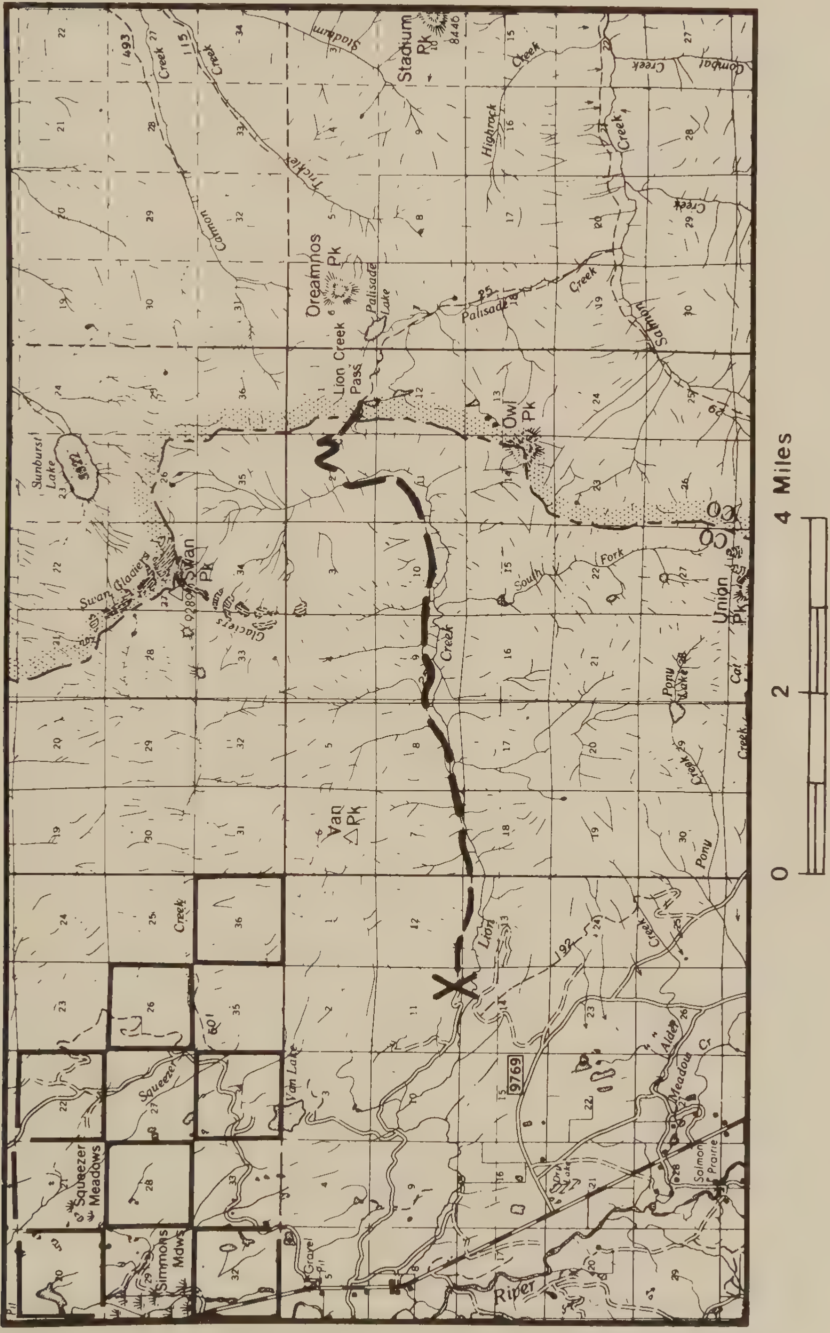
Turn east off the Montana Highway 83 onto the Lion Creek Road #9769, about fifteen miles south of the town of Swan Lake. Follow the Lion Creek Road for three miles to Forest Road #5383 and then to the trailhead for Lion Creek Trail #25.

The trail leaves the main Swan Valley, climbing rocky benches sprinkled with a few old ponderosa pines, as it enters the narrow canyon of Lion Creek. A few miles of trail take you to the first of the several waterfalls on Lion Creek. It cascades down from the glaciers and snowfields of Swan and Union peaks.

Continuing on, the trail passes through a majestic grove of old western red cedars, which are becoming rare in Montana as loggers cut the remaining unprotected old growth timber. After the grove, another series of falls appears on the creek just after the South Fork of Lion Creek joins the main stream.

There is a good camping spot about eight miles from the trailhead, as you enter the grand basin that wraps around the southeast flank of Swan Peak. This campsite can be used as a base camp to climb the southern ridge of Swan Peak, or you can continue up and over Lion Creek Pass into the Palisade drainage in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. In all, it's 7.5 miles from your car at the trailhead to Lion Creek Pass and the Bob Marshall boundary.

When you enter Lion Creek Canyon, you enter the grizzly's domain. Please respect the great bear, and take the standard precautions to keep a clean camp.—*John Gatchall*



HIKE 54 *CRATER LAKE*

General description: An overnight hike through subalpine terrain to a good fishing lake.
General location: 20 miles north of Swan Lake in the Swan Range.
Maps: Jewel Basin and Crater Lake USGS Quads, and the Flathead National Forest Map, Swan Ranger District.
Special attraction: An interesting hike through western forest land similar to Glacier National Park.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 570 feet.
Elevation loss: 180 feet.
Season: July through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, Bigfork, MT 59911, or call (406) 837-5081.

The hike: To reach high-elevation lakes, you usually have to make a healthy climb. Crater Lake is an exception. The trail starts high, so it's five easy miles to this scenic fishing lake—a ten-mile round-trip. The trail you'll follow is commonly known as Alpine Trail #7.

To reach this trailhead, go north on Montana Highway 83 from Swan Lake. After about sixteen miles, turn right at the Echo Lake Store on Foothills Road. Follow this road with the help of the signs for about seven miles to a parking lot. Beyond this lot, the road is closed for motorized use. Hike up this closed road to an old parking lot on the south face of Mount Aeneas.

From the parking lot, the trail heads southeast along the south face of Mount Aeneas. A quarter-mile later, it splits. Take the trail on the right to Birch Lake. It cuts through a lush forest sprinkled with wet meadows for six miles before making a slight drop into Crater Lake. There are several trail junctions along the way, but they're usually well-marked, so simply follow the signs to Crater Lake.

After two miles, you reach Birch Lake, and at three miles Squaw Lake can be seen a few hundred yards east of the trail.

The Forest Service adequately maintains this trail all summer. The area is remote, and motorized vehicles are banned. The trail is very popular, so expect to see other hikers.

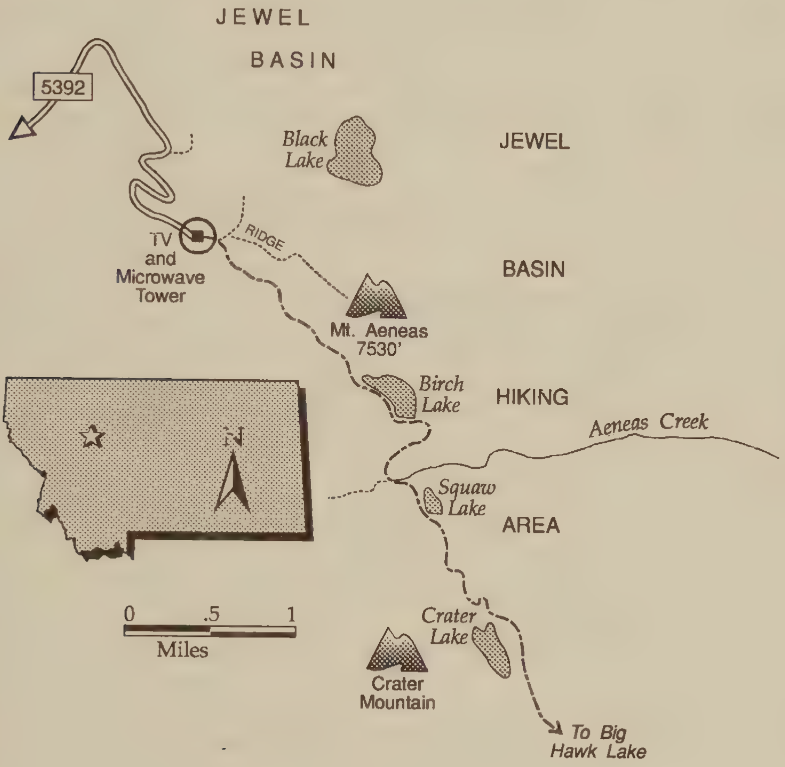
If you're sharp-eyed, you might spot a mountain goat on the crags above the trail or a deer or elk in one of the many open parks. Wildflowers abound, especially at the beginning of the hike along the face of Mount Aeneas.

An occasional grizzly is reported in this area, and black bears are fairly common. However, reports of bear trouble are almost nonexistent.

Crater Lake can be nearly perfect for a family overnighter. The hike is easy, about the right distance, cool, and can be taken anytime from July through October. Be sure to bring mosquito repellent, however, as Crater Lake seems to have its share of these pesky insects.

Most campers stay at Crater Lake where the fishing for brook trout is excellent. However, a few stay at Squaw or Birch lakes, which are along the trail to Crater Lake. All three lakes have several Forest Service campsites. At Crater Lake, firewood is scarce, but it's everywhere at the other lakes.

HIKE 54 *CRATER LAKE*


JEWEL
BASIN
5392
Black Lake
JEWEL
RIDGE
TV and Microwave Tower
BASIN
Mt. Aeneas 7530'
Birch Lake
HIKING
Aeneas Creek
N
Squaw Lake
AREA
0
.5
1
Miles
Crater Lake
Crater Mountain
To Big Hawk Lake

Perhaps the highlight of this trip is the rocky, glacier-scoured basin around Crater Lake. There seems to be more rock than vegetation in this basin. Except for the Crater Lake basin, the entire trail goes through a series of moist, mountain glades similar to those of Glacier Park.

The Crater Lake hike has a wide selection of possible side trips. Perhaps the most popular is to continue south on the same trail for two more miles to Big Hawk Lake, which is slightly larger than Crater Lake but not quite as scenic.—*Larry Thompson*

HIKE 55 *JEWEL BASIN*

General description: A collection of easy- to-moderate hikes.
General location: 10 miles northeast of Bigfork on the northern tip of the Swan Range.
Maps: Jewel Basin, Crater Lake, and Big Hawk Mountain USGS Quads; and a special Forest Service handout and map on the Jewel Basin Hiking Area.
Special attraction: A beautiful chunk of backcountry set aside for hikers only.
Difficulty: Easy.
Season: July through October.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Swan Lake Ranger District, Bigfork, MT 59911, or call (406) 837-5081.

The hike: The Forest Service has designated Jewel Basin, with its twenty-eight lakes and thirty-five miles of trail, as a special hiking area, prohibiting pack stock and motorized vehicles. The 15,349-acre area is aptly named.

To find it, drive two miles north of Bigfork and turn east off Montana Highway 35 onto Montana Highway 83. Drive about 2.7 miles and turn north onto Echo Lake Road. After 2.5 miles, take the Noisy Creek Road to the east and follow it until it ends at a parking area where several trails into Jewel Basin begin.

Once at the parking lot, you can choose from the wide selection of scenic trips leaving from this trailhead. Five trails leave from the end of Noisy Creek Road, all of which will get you into Jewel Basin in two miles or less. Get a map and plan a trip that suits you.

Jewel Basin is perfect for beginning hikers wanting to see what backpacking is all about—or for families ready to introduce their children to the backcountry without working too hard the first time. The area is also just right for a leisurely day hike—perhaps with a brief sampling of the area's good fishing.

You can take a short hop into tranquil Picnic Lakes or a longer hike covering most of the basin, stopping to fish and camp at several lakes. Almost all lakes have suitable campsites, but plan on using your backpack stove to keep the sites from showing the wear-and-tear of heavy use.

Jewel Basin even has something for you if you have an irresistible urge to climb to the top of something. From the end of Noisy Creek Road, you can take a short hike on a trail along Aeneas Ridge to the top of 7,530-foot Mount Aeneas, which offers super views of Flathead Lake and the southern portion of Glacier National Park.—*Pat Caffrey and Loren Kreck*

Because the above describes a general area instead of a specific hike, there is no map.—Editor

HIKE 56 *ALPINE TRAIL, COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN*

General description: A long, 3-day hike for experienced hikers.
General location: Just southeast of Columbia Falls.
Maps: Doris Mountain, Jewel Basin, and Hash Mountain USGS Quads; Forest Service's Jewel Basin Hiking Area Map; and Flathead National Forest Map, Swan Lake Ranger District.
Special attractions: Outstanding panoramic views of northwestern Montana and Flathead Lake from a delightful ridgeline trail.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 5,437 feet.
Elevation loss: 4,637 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Hungry Horse Ranger District, Box 190340, Hungry Horse, MT 59919, or call (406) 387-5243.

The hike: This twenty-seven-mile hike isn't for beginners or small children. It usually requires three days with a full pack and involves a 3,500-foot elevation gain.

To reach the trailhead, turn south off U.S. Highway 2 about 1.3 miles east of its junction with Montana Highway 40. This turn is marked with a "Columbia Mountain Trail" sign. Follow this road an eighth of a mile to the trail marked "Columbia Mountain Trail #51."

Trail #51 climbs steadily up the slopes of Columbia Mountain and then intersects with Trail #7. Take #7 all the way to Strawberry Lake, and then turn west of Trail #5 for a short drop down to Krause Road #5390 and the end of your three-day excursion.

This is a point-to-point hike, so it's best to leave a vehicle at the end of the hike (Strawberry Lake trailhead) or have somebody pick you up there. To find the Strawberry Lake trailhead, turn east from U.S. Highway 2 or Montana Highway 35 (four miles north of Creston) onto the Lake Blaine Road. Just after passing Lake Blaine, turn south onto the Foothills Road and go about eight miles. Then turn left (east) up the Krause Creek Road to the Strawberry Lake trailhead.

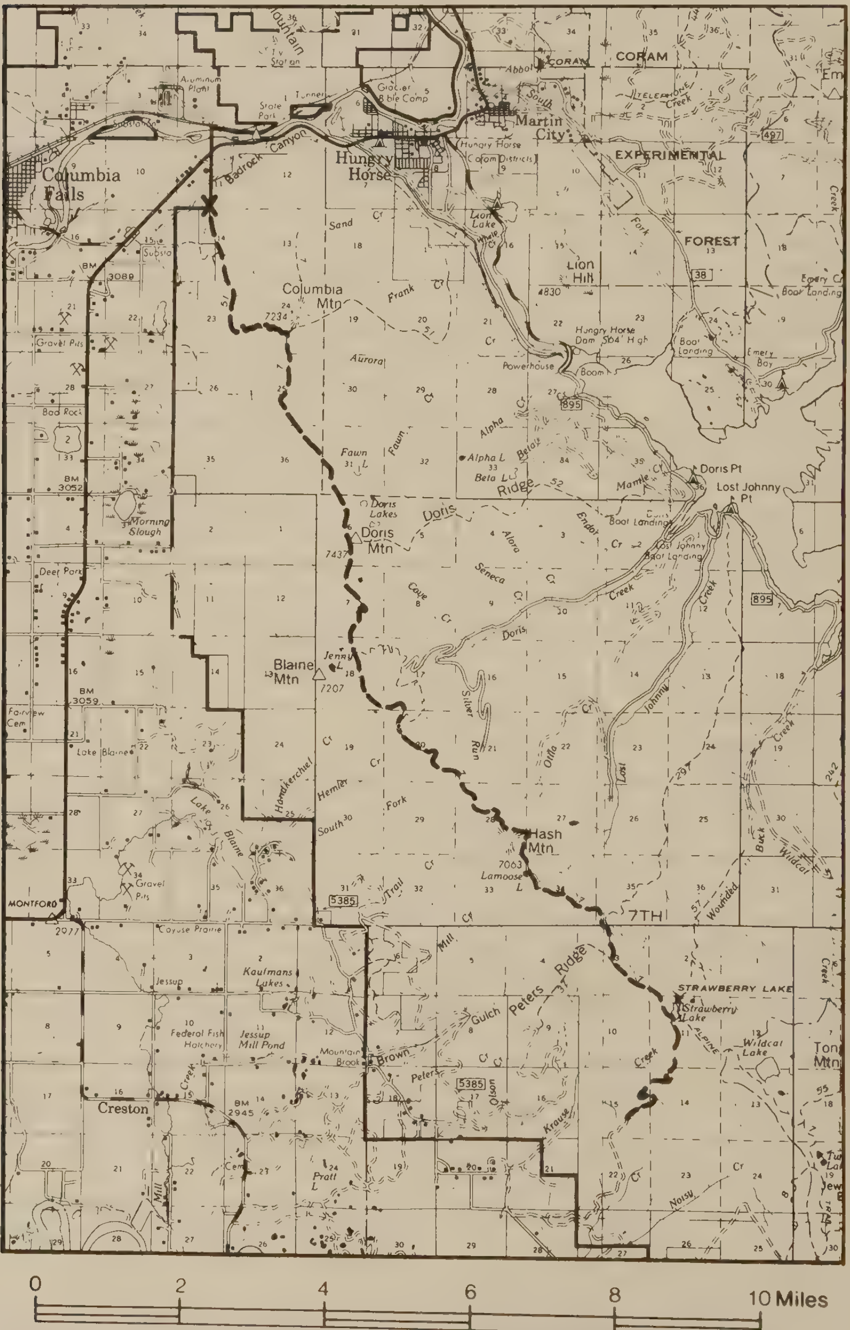
Although there is water at many places along the trail, there are some stretches on the northern half of this hike where you'll have to carry it. Mosquitoes can be a problem early in the season, but they seem less severe than in many areas. Drinking water and shelter from wind can often be found by dropping over the ridge to the east into the high meadows.

Black bears and grizzlies inhabit this area, so there is a chance of a confrontation. The likelihood of such an encounter might be higher here than on many trails in Montana's national forests, but the probability of bear trouble is still much lower than in nearby Glacier National Park. Proper bear country manners will further lower the chance of bear trouble.

Except on the section below Strawberry Lake, you'll encounter few motorized vehicles on this trail because of its remoteness. Signs of civilization—clearcuts, cities, etc.—can be seen in the distance, but the terrain is relatively untouched along the trail.

The twenty-seven miles can be made in two days, but to really enjoy the scenery on this high-altitude hike, allow three. Although the trail is remote and

HIKE 56 *ALPINE TRAIL, COLUMBIA MOUNTAIN*


Columbia Falls
Aluminum Plant
State Park
Badrock Canyon
Hungry Horse
Glacier Bible Camp
Martin City
Abbot
CORAM
EXPERIMENTAL
FOREST
Hungry Horse Ranger Districts
Lion Lake
Lion Hill
4830
Hungry Horse Dam 564' High
Powerhouse
Boom
Boat Landing
Emery Boy
Emery Cr
Columbia Mtn
7234
Sand Cr
Frank Cr
Aurora
Fawn L
Alpha L
Beta L
Betaz Ridge
Doris Lakes
Doris Mtn
7437
Doris Pt
Lost Johnny Pt
Mamie Cr
Lost Johnny Boat Landing
Seneca Cr
Cave Cr
Doris Cr
Jenny L
Blaine Mtn
7207
Silver Run
Lost Johnny Creek
Handkerchief
Hemler Cr
South Fork
Hash Mtn
7063
Lamoose L
Morning Slough
Deer Park
Gravel Pits
Bad Rock
Fairview Cem
Lake Blaine
Lake Blaine
MONTFORD
2977
Coyote Prairie
Jessup
Kaufmans Lakes
Federal Fish Hatchery
Jessup Mill Pond
Mountain Brook
Creston
BM 2945
Peters Ridge
Peters Gulch
Brown
Olson
Krause
Mill Cr
Pratt L
STRAWBERRY LAKE
Strawberry Lake
ALPINE
Wildcat Lake
Wildcat Cr
Wounded Buck Creek
Noisy Cr
7TH
Tongue Mtn
2
38
497
895
5385
0
2
4
6
8
10 Miles

primitive, it's still well-maintained—good enough to follow easily. There is a fair chance of spotting elk or deer, and a great variety of wildflowers will greet you in summer, particularly in mid-July. Snow may block this trail until early July.

The best campsites are at Lamoose and Strawberry lakes, but there is a good selection from which to choose. Both of these lakes have fish and easily available water, but firewood is scarce, so bring your backpack stove.

Although there is some fishing in Strawberry and Lamoose lakes, this hike isn't known for its fishing. The main attraction is the view.

There are many variations of this hike because of the extensive trail system in the area. For instance, you could easily be lured into extending your trip into nearby Jewel Basin.—*Loren Kreck*

The Great Bear Wilderness

Overview

The Great Bear Wilderness is properly named. Just south of Glacier National Park, it forms the link to the Bob Marshall Wilderness for grizzly bears. The bears often cross U.S. Highway 2 south of Glacier to forage in less densely populated areas.

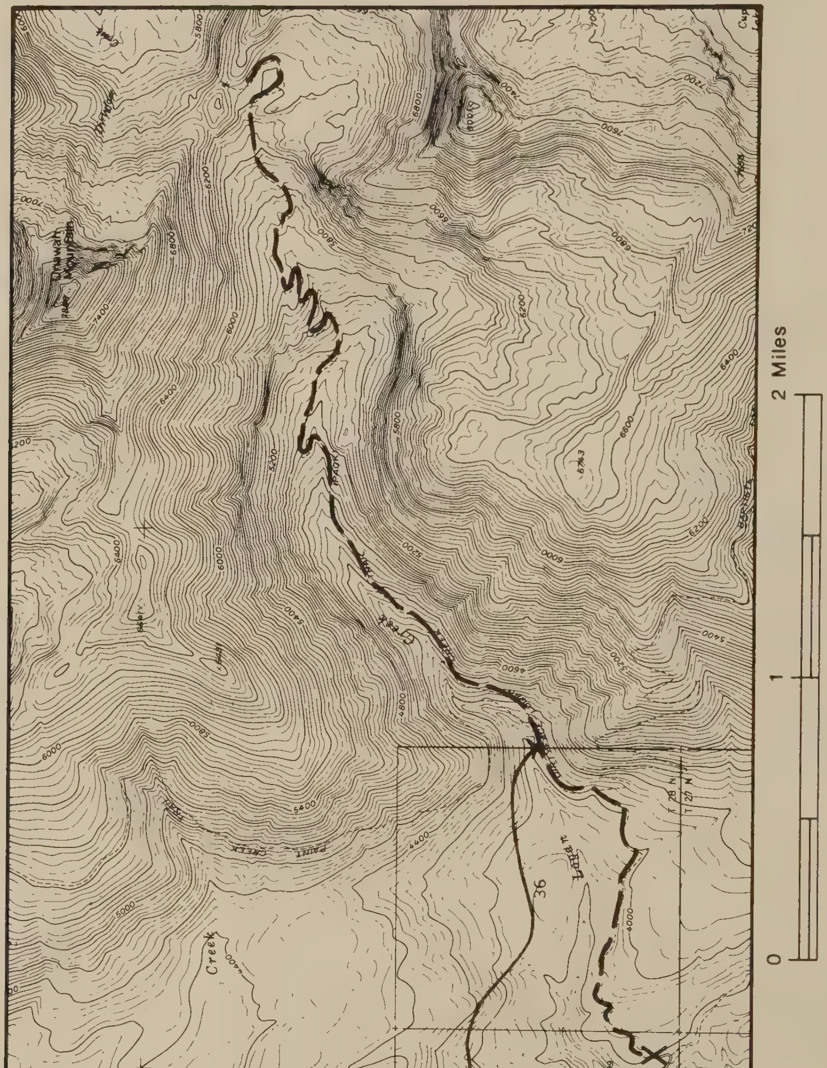
Roadless areas within the Great Bear secure habitat for grizzly, trout, eagles, and elk. These areas are increasingly popular with anglers and hikers. Many hikers seek out areas where the chance of seeing a grizzly still exists. The deep spruce forests, tall cliffs, and crashing waterfalls present a memorable wilderness experience. Although during peak seasons, so many hikers, mules, and horses enter the Bob Marshall and Great Bear wilderness areas that trails sometimes become muddy highways.

HIKE 57 *LOGAN CREEK*

General description: A steep day hike for experienced hikers.
General location: Just east of Hungry Horse Reservoir.
Maps: Felix Peak and Nimrod USGS Quads; the Great Bear Wilderness Map; and the Flathead National Forest Map (north half).
Special attractions: Scenery—especially rock cliffs and one very high waterfall.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,300 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, Box 190340, Hungry Horse, MT 59919, or call (406) 387-5243.

The hike: Although the trip up and back down Logan Creek usually makes a nice day hike for good hikers, a few decide to spend the night near where the trail ends—on the divide between the South Fork and Middle Fork of the Flathead River.

HIKE 57 *LOGAN CREEK*


0
1
2 Miles
Logan
Creek
Paint
Creek
Paint Creek
Oiwash Mountain
36
35
T 28 N
T 27 N
6743
4000
4200
4400
4800
5200
5400
5800
6000
6200
6400
6800
7400
3800

To find the trailhead, turn south off U.S. Highway 2 at Martin City and go along the east shore of Hungry Horse Reservoir, following Forest Road #38 for thirty-five miles until you reach Logan Creek. There should be a sign marking the turnoff onto a smaller dirt road that leads up Logan Creek.

The trail up Logan Creek is brushy, and the Forest Service only maintains it every four years.

The first part of the trail follows Logan Creek through deep spruce forests. After leaving the creek, look for the sheer cliffs to your left and the cascading waterfall on your right. Soon you'll break out into a luscious subalpine meadow.

Through the meadows flows a babbling brook lined with buttercups and other wildflowers. There's also a small pond, an elk wallow, and a waterfall. The last mile of the hike gradually climbs through subalpine meadows and large spruces and larch snags to the divide, where you get an unsurpassed view into Dirtyface Creek and the Middle Fork of the Flathead River.

It's six miles from trailhead to divide, with an elevation gain of 2,300 feet. The round-trip will take at least six hours. Water is available all along the trail. The only possible hazards are two crossings of Logan Creek, which could be tricky at high water. Mosquitoes exist in tolerable densities, especially in July, August, and September, which is the best time for this hike.

If you prefer to make this an overnighter, the best campsite is in the meadow just as you break out of the brush and just below the divide. It has a delicious stream and carpets of wildflowers. Bring your backpack stove, however, as firewood is scarce unless you want to carry it from the edge of the meadow.

This trail continues down Dirtyface Creek through old clearcuts and hits US 2, 3.5 miles west of Essex. However, most hikers prefer to make it an out-and-back hike.

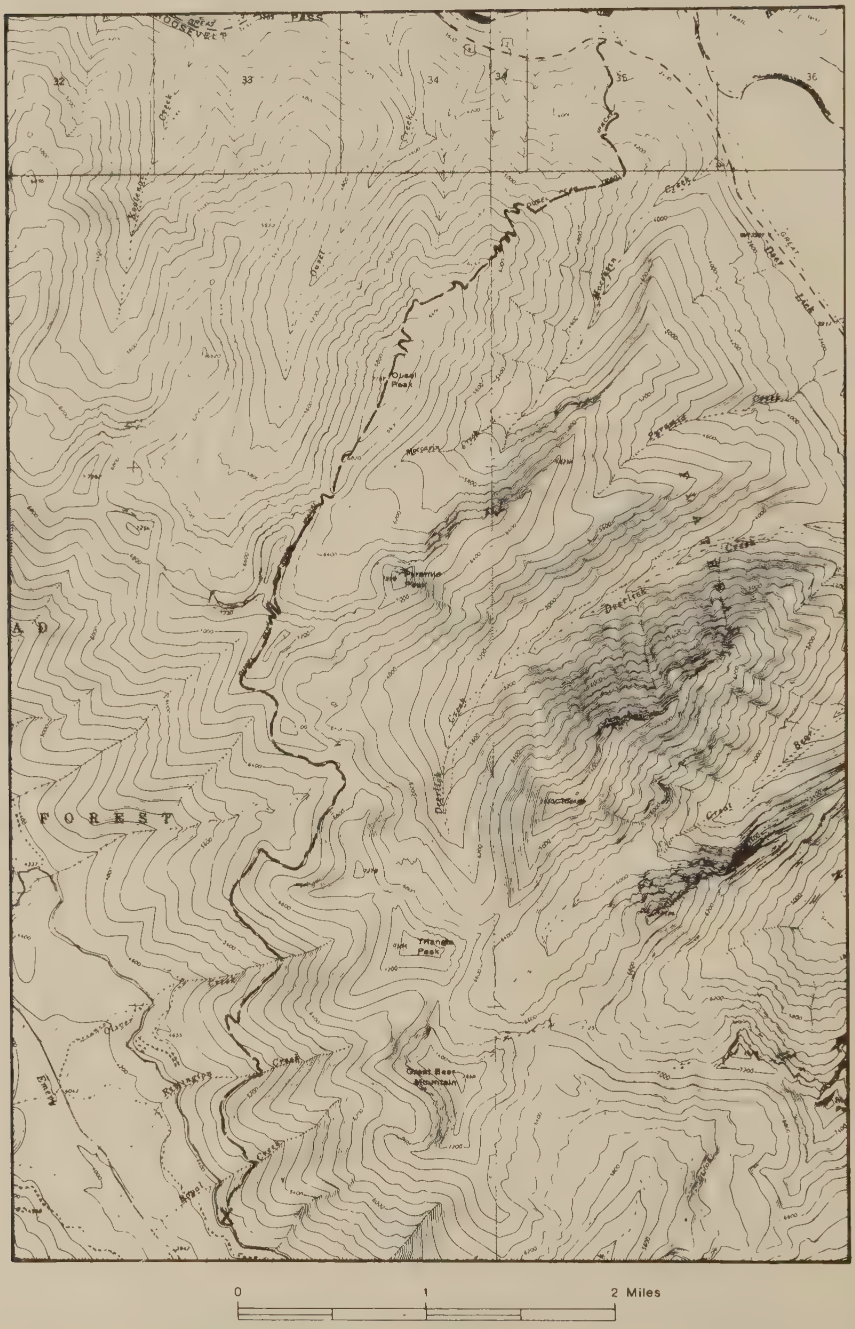
Apparently, part of this area was left out of the Great Bear Wilderness because of numerous mining claims. But it can still remain in its present roadless condition if enough people voice support for wilderness management.—*Elaine and Art Sedlack*

HIKE 58 *OUSEL PEAK*

General description: A long day hike for experienced hikers.
General location: Just southwest of West Glacier in the Great Bear Wilderness.
Maps: West Glacier and Nyack USGS Quads; the Great Bear Wilderness Map; and the Flathead National Forest Map (north half).
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,757 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,757 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, Box 190340, Hungry Horse, MT 59919, or call (406) 387-5243.

The hike: Although the trailhead may be difficult to locate, the Ousel Peak hike warrants the extra time. To make sure you don't have trouble finding

HIKE 58 *OUSEL PEAK*



PASS
32
33
34
35
36
Creek
Ousel
Ousel
Peak
Moccasin
Creek
Pyramid
Peak
Deerlick
Creek
Great
Bear
F O R E S T
Triangle
Peak
Great Bear
Mountain
Olson
Essex
Creek
Creek
Royal
0
1
2 Miles

the trailhead, however, check with the Hungry Horse Ranger Station on U.S. Highway 2 in Hungry Horse.

Take US 2 and turn south at Martin City on Forest Road #38, which skirts the east shore of Hungry Horse Reservoir. Go seven miles and turn east onto Emery Creek Road. Follow this road up onto the Highline Loop Road. The trail begins about 7.5 miles from the reservoir road, or 2.5 miles from the only bend (180 degrees) in the road. The first two hundred yards of the trail were eliminated by a clearcut in 1978, but the new trailhead, which is marked by a small sign, can be found twenty feet up a skid road in the cut.

This is a rugged, twelve-mile, point-to-point hike that goes from Hungry Horse Reservoir on the South Fork of the Flathead River over the Flathead Range and through the Great Bear Wilderness down to US 2 on the Middle Fork of the Flathead. After finding the trail, you move through an open forest of large tamaracks. Then the trail enters a rocky drainage before breaking out onto open, rocky ridges with views of Deerlick Creek, Nyack Creek, the Middle Fork of the Flathead, Harrison Lake in Glacier National Park, and many of the highest peaks in the park. The trail follows the rocky ridges for about three miles before ducking around the back of Ousel Peak. Then it drops abruptly down to US 2, five miles east of West Glacier.

On older maps, this hike is shown as two trails—Trail #388 up from Hungry Horse Reservoir and Trail #331 down to US 2. On newer maps, both trails are numbered #331. The two trails both go to the vicinity of Ousel Peak but don't actually connect. Plan on spending some extra time looking for the other trail, and refer to your topo map.

The trail is sometimes hard to find as it comes off Ousel Peak, so watch your topo map closely. The last three-mile drop to the highway cuts through alder thickets that can be bothersome.

This isn't a trip for beginners. It rises 2,700 feet (4,400 to 7,100) and the trail can be hard to follow on the rocky ridges. In addition, you have to bring drinking water for the entire trip, as the trail is quite dry. There are also a few blowdowns on the South Fork side to slow progress. On the plus side, mosquitoes are rarely a problem.

It takes a good hiker eight hours to make this hike. Unless you want to hike through snow, wait until mid-July to try it.

Most hikers leave a vehicle where the trail meets US 2, or they have somebody pick them up. Hitchhiking back to the trailhead would be difficult.

Wild animals—elk, deer, black bears, and others—are fairly common. Even an occasional grizzly bear is spotted. And watch for glacier lilies, lupine, and other wildflowers. Later in the year, expect to find some excellent huckleberry patches.

Few if any hikers make this an overnighter. There aren't any good campsites.
—Elaine and Art Sedlack

HIKE 59 *GREAT NORTHERN*

General description: A mountain ascent through timbered undergrowth and up scree slopes for scramblers with good stamina.
General location: 30 miles east of Kalispell in the Great Bear Wilderness.
Maps: Mount Grant USGS Quad; the Great Bear Wilderness Map; and "Climbing Great Northern Montana," a Forest Service handout.
Special attractions: Goat trails, fine scenery, Stanton Glacier, and spectacular views of southern Glacier National Park.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 4,471 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, Box 190340, Hungry Horse, MT, or call (406) 387-5243.

The hike: Although named for a former railroad, the mountain's name suggests exactly what it is. Its graceful curves and broad faces are irresistible to the individual who has acquired a taste for high places. With the incomparable peaks of Glacier Park close at hand, this mountain attracts many individuals solely on the merits of its own beauty.

Two popular routes are described on a Forest Service flyer available at the Hungry Horse Ranger Station. The following is a shorter variation of the western approach described in the flyer.

Take the East Side Road of Hungry Horse Reservoir, which leaves U.S. Highway 2 as the main street of Martin City. About 8.5 miles past the Emery Creek boat landing, hang a left (uphill), and go half a mile to the Highline Loop Road junction, where you'll find a small bridge. Park at this bridge (elevation 4,249 feet), fill your canteen, and start climbing.

Look south of the bridge and notice the impenetrable thickets of brush and small trees. After briefly considering whether the whole idea is worthwhile, charge into these thickets. They don't last long and are the hardest part of the climb. Find a game trail to help escape this jungle.

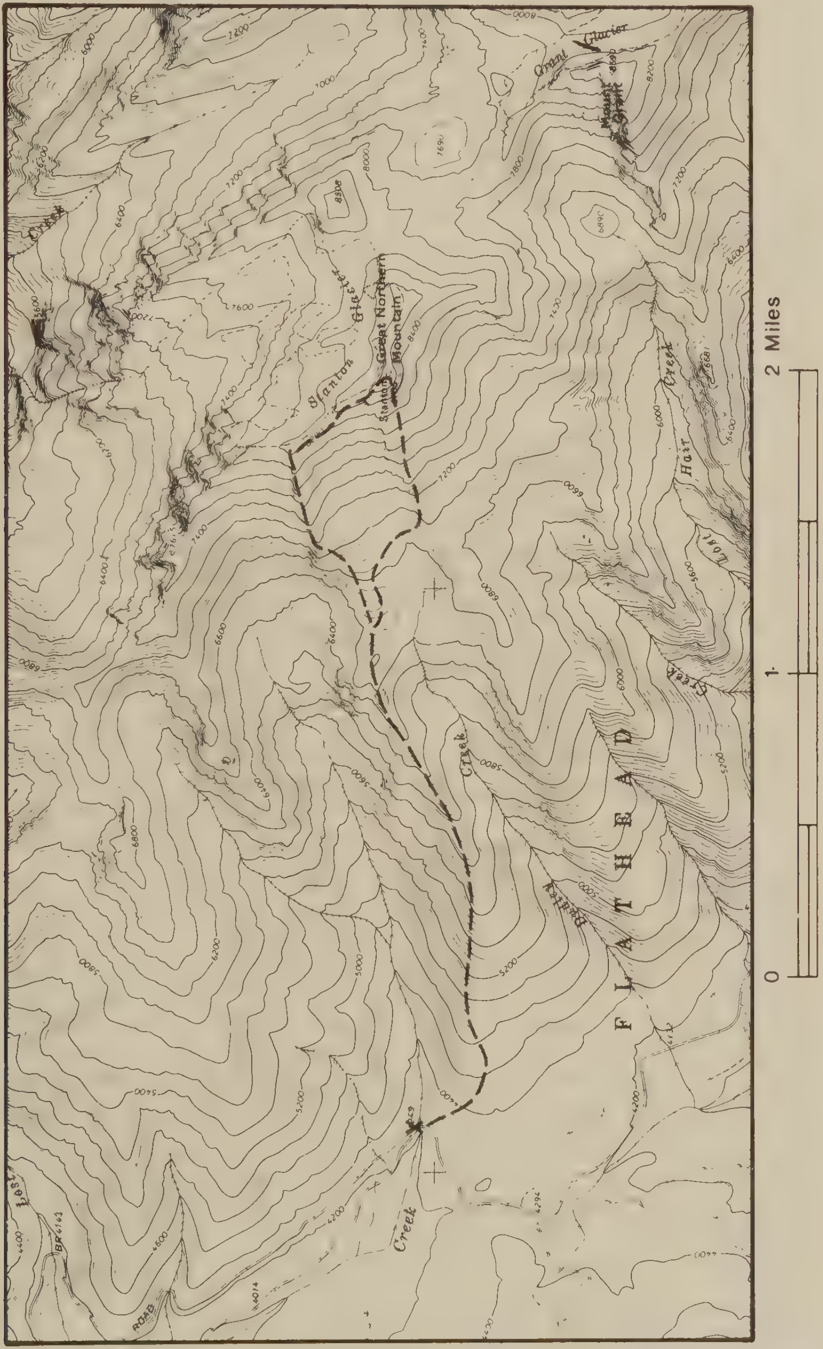
Climb the ascending ridge on the south side of Hungry Horse Creek, where you just filled your canteen. Initially, work to the south, climbing and contouring to get out of the brush and windfalls on the north side of the ridge. In early August, be careful not to delay too long in these massive huckleberry patches.

Within half a mile, a definite ridgetop complete with definite trail develops. Follow this ridge for one mile to where it peaks out at timberline. Ahead of you is a small timbered saddle on the other side of which is the Great Northern.

From here you have a choice of two routes. Note the rocky, open spur ascending directly to the peak. Save this route for the descent. It's loose scree, and with great care and concentration, you can run down its slopes in ten minutes.

Now note another ascending spur to the left (north) of the main peak, with clumps of gnarled trees reaching almost to the summit ridge. After a few gasps at the scenery, follow intriguing little goat trails along ledges and around rock knobs to the 8,720-foot summit.

HIKE 59 *GREAT NORTHERN*


Grant Glacier
Mount Grant
Stanton Glacier
Great Northern Mountain
Stanton
Hair Creek
Lost Creek
Creek
FLATHEAD
Creek
Lost
ROAD
0
1
2 Miles

By now you've noticed one-hundred-twenty-acre Stanton Glacier, which reaches all the way to the summit ridge on the east side. This is a "real" glacier of hard, slippery ice and deep crevasses, so stay off it unless you're properly equipped.

To the east is the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and across it the usually unseen array of peaks of southern Glacier Park. One unusually monstrous-looking peak sticks up above the others. The south portion of this peak is pyramid-shaped, with a chopped-off ridge to the north. This is Mount Stimson, at 10,142 feet the second highest peak and the most exhausting climb in the park. It's just north of Church Butte, a flat-topped rectangle. St. Nicholas is easy to spot because, quite literally, it sticks out like a sore thumb. And it appears impossible to climb.

Despite all these impressive peaks, Great Northern maintains its own magic lure.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 60 *STANTON LAKE*

General description: A short hike suitable for any hiker.
General location: 13 miles southeast of West Glacier in the Great Bear Wilderness.
Maps: Mount Grant, Pinnacle, and Stanton Lake USGS Quads; the Great Bear Wilderness Map; and the Flathead National Forest Map (north half).
Special attraction: An easy way to get a choice view of the mountains of Glacier Park and of Great Northern Mountain in the Great Bear Wilderness.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 318 feet.
Season: June through October.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, Box 190340, Hungry Horse, MT 59919, or call (406) 387-5243.

The hike: The Stanton Lake Trail begins right next to U.S. Highway 2 just east of Stanton Lake Lodge and about thirteen miles east of West Glacier. So for once the trailhead is easy to find.

Except for some motorcycle traffic on the first part of the trail, this hike is remote. The trail is well-maintained, and it includes a gradual incline, rising five hundred feet in two miles. There isn't any drinking water until you reach the lake.

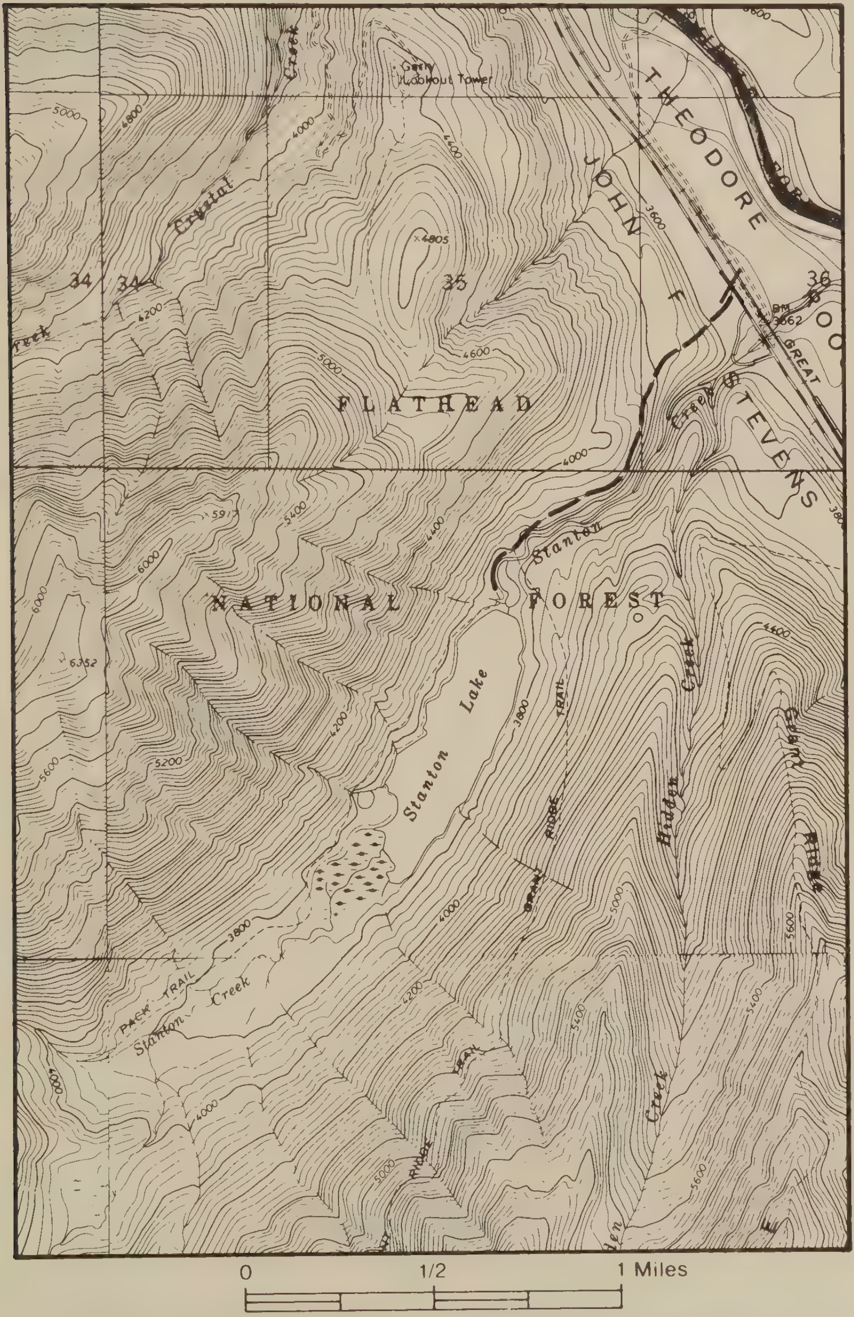
This trail receives fairly heavy use, and it's easy to see why. It's an easy hike open from June through October. (Bring your insect repellent in June and July.) The likelihood for bear trouble is minimal.

Hikers often get a glimpse of a moose at the head of the lake or a beaver in the beaver ponds as the stream leaves the lake. Wildflowers are fairly common—beargrass, wild hollyhocks, cow parsnip, and others.

Some hikers carry in small rubber rafts to fish from. Usually this is worth the effort, making it possible to catch larger rainbow and cutthroat trout. You might be able to catch some smaller cutthroat from shore.

Although this hike is only two miles long, many backpackers stay overnight at the lake, using the campsite at the head of the lake where water and firewood

HIKE 60 STANTON LAKE


Gerry Lookout Tower
Crystal
Creek
FLATHEAD
NATIONAL
FOREST
Stanton Lake
Stanton
Creek
PACK TRAIL
Stanton Creek
Hidden Creek
GRANT RIDGE TRAIL
JOHN F. STEVENS
THEODORE ROOSEVELT
GREAT
Grant Ridge
BM 3562
4805
5917
6352
34
35
36
0
1/2
1 Miles

are easy to find. However, heavy use of this campsite has created severe impacts, beyond acceptable standards for a wilderness area. Minimize your presence by using a stove instead of a fire and by keeping a spotlessly clean camp.

Perhaps the highlight of this hike is the vista of the mountains of Glacier National Park to the north and massive Great Northern Mountain to the south.

Since this popular lake has an above average number of visitors, be extra careful not to leave signs of your passing. And do whatever you can to pick up or cover up the signs of others who weren't so careful.—*Elaine and Art Sedlack*

HIKE 61 *MARION LAKE*

General description: A leisurely day hike or overnighter into one of the many high-altitude lakes in the Great Bear Wilderness.
General location: Just south of Glacier National Park.
Maps: Pinnacle USGS Quad; the Great Bear Wilderness Map; and the Flathead National Forest Map (north half).
Special attraction: An easily accessible wilderness lake.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,000 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, Box 190340, Hungry Horse, MT 59919, or call (406) 387-5243.

The hike: Marion Lake is easily accessible and has good fishing. As a result, it probably receives more use than other mountain lakes in designated wilderness areas.

The trailhead is also easy to find. Turn west onto the Essex Creek Road, which turns off U.S. Highway 2 a mile north of Essex or twenty-four miles south of West Glacier. Watch for a sign marking the trailhead about 1.5 miles from the highway.

The way to Marion Lake is a steady, uphill pull. The trail gains about 2,000 feet in three miles. A family should be able to reach the lake in fewer than three hours and hike out in two hours or less.

The trail is well-maintained, and there's plenty of drinking water and a tolerable number of mosquitoes—except some years in June and July. Since this lake lies within the Great Bear Wilderness, the hike has a remote feeling, and of course motorized vehicles are banned.

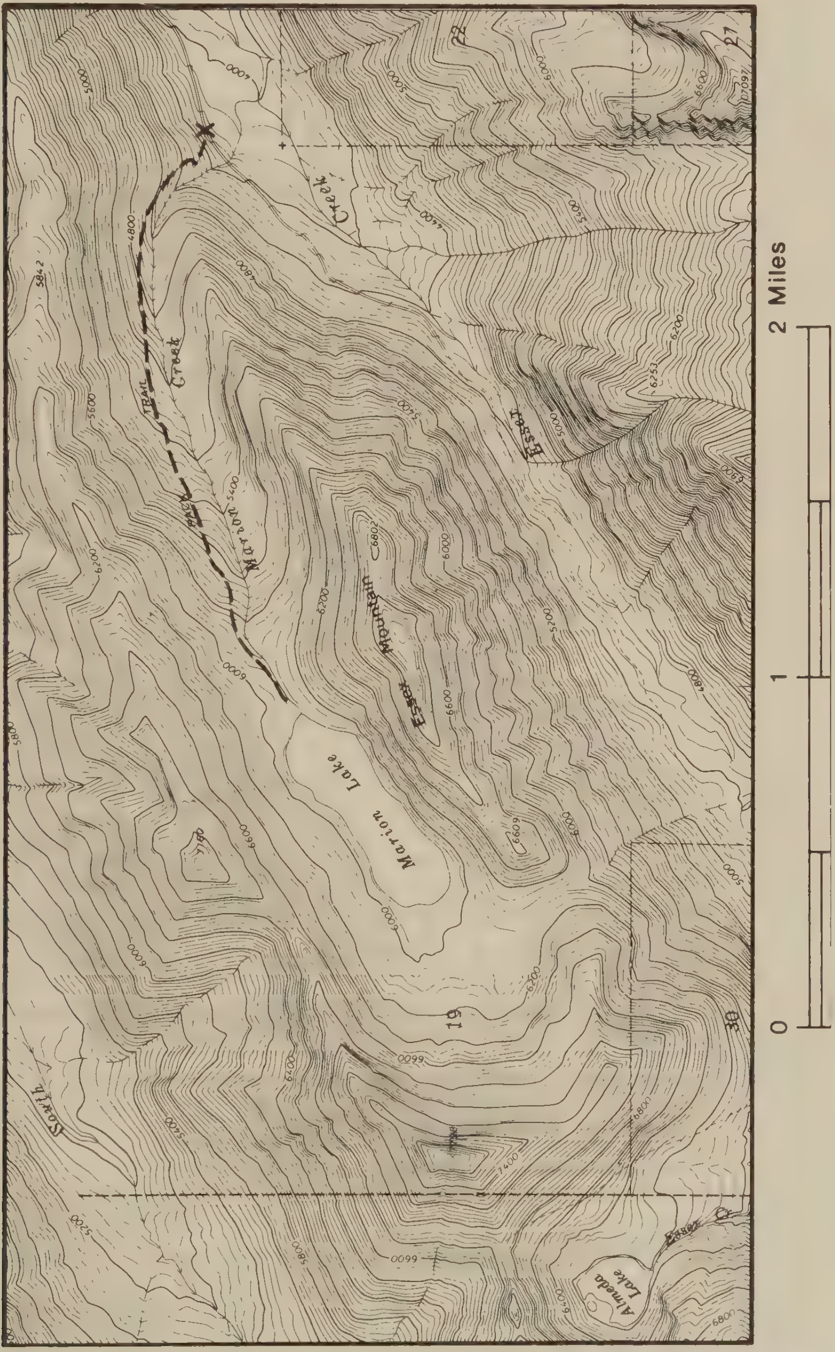
Bear problems are minimal even though black bears are numerous and an occasional grizzly frequents this area. Skip this hike in June unless you want to risk hiking through snowbanks.

At the head of the lake lies a gorgeous, grassy swale blanketed with wildflowers—beargrass, fireweed, wild hollyhocks, dogwood, bunchberry, and others.

The main trail comes to the foot of the lake, but a faint trail circles about half a mile around to the head of the lake.

For an excellent side trip, work your way through the swale to the pass on

HIKE 61 *MARION LAKE*


Marion Lake
Marion Creek
Essat Mountain
Essat Creek
Creek
Almeda Lake
South
Pack Trail
6802
6609
6253
5842
7097
19
21
22
30
0
1
2 Miles

the horizon. It's only about half a mile from where the trail hits the lake. At the top of the swale, you can look down over 1,000-foot cliffs into the headwaters of Essex Creek.

Backpackers almost always camp at the head of the lake, where scenery is abundant and firewood scarce. Bring a stove anyway to reduce your impact on this heavily used campsite.

Fishing at the lake is good, particularly in June when the ice breaks up. The lake has a healthy population of cutthroat and rainbow trout. Each winter, a few avid anglers ski or snowshoe to the lake to fish through the ice, and they usually have good success.

Fortunately, Montana has choice spots such as this within reach of everybody. Unfortunately, Marion Lake shows a little wear and tear as the result of this accessibility and popularity. Take a bag along and carry out any garbage a thoughtless hiker might have left behind.—*Elaine and Art Sedlack*

Whitefish Range

Overview

This region just north of Whitefish and west of Glacier National Park is a crucial area for timber production, recreation, and the grizzly bear. The roadless areas of Ten Lakes and the North Fork Flathead River are essential for any realistic grizzly bear recovery effort. Also, several confirmed sightings of woodland caribou have been reported in the Ten Lakes area.

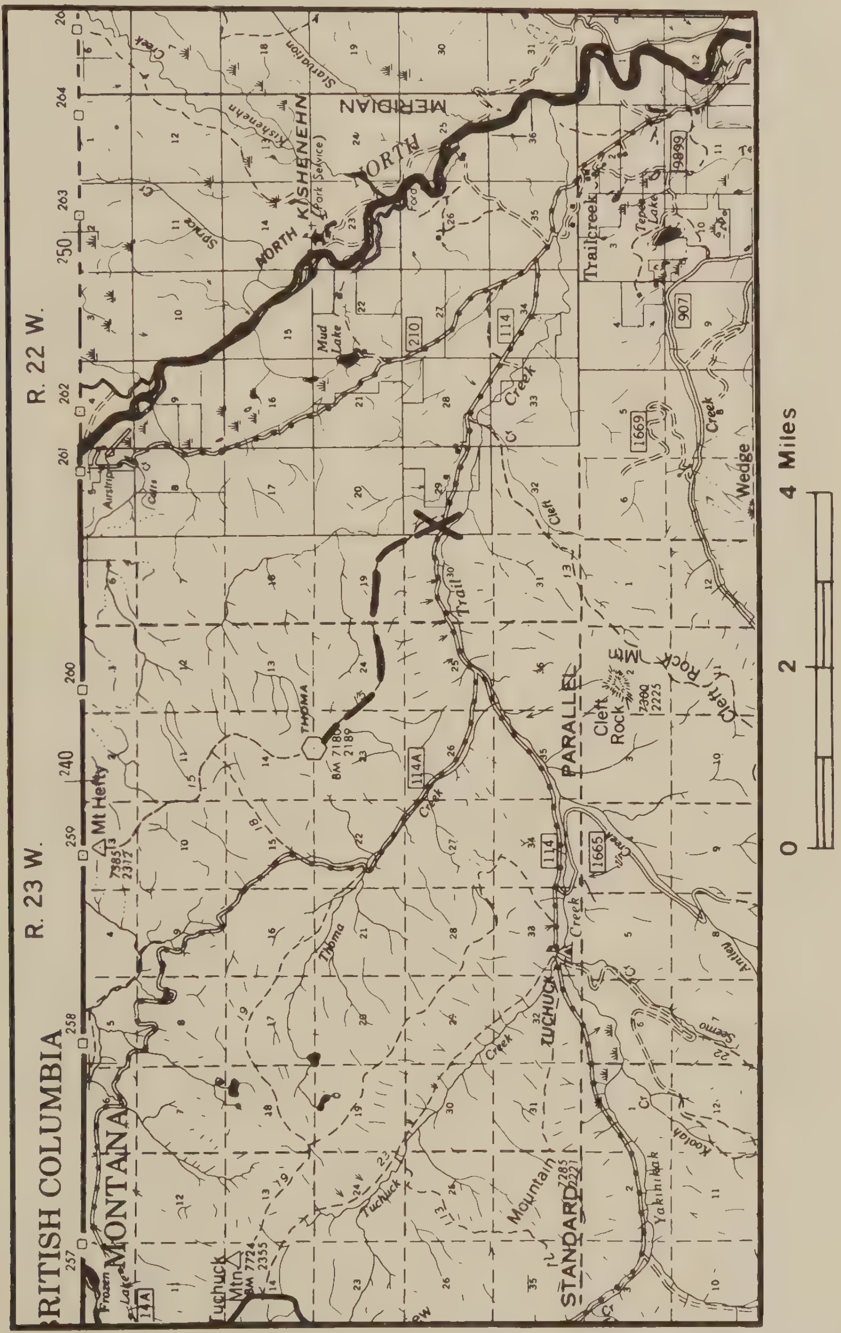
The streams and lakes in the Whitefish Range have long been fished by local residents. Outdoor recreation is an important part of the culture preserved by many residents. The Whitefish Range may be known because of the Big Mountain Ski Resort at the southern end of the range. But with most tourists concentrated in Glacier National Park, many areas of the Whitefish Range are still undeveloped and pristine.

The Ten Lakes area is currently proposed for wilderness designation as the Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness. Also, areas near Tuchuck Mountain and the old-growth forest along the North Fork are included. To protect one of the most diverse populations of large mammals, this area must be preserved.

HIKE 62 *MOUNT THOMA*

General description: A 10-mile, round-trip climb in the North Fork of the Flathead wildlands.
General location: Forty miles north of Columbia Falls near the border with British Columbia.
Maps: Mount Hefty USGS Quad and the Flathead National Forest Map (north half).
Special attraction: Some spectacular views of Glacier National Park from a little-known area.
Difficulty: Moderate.

HIKE 62 *MOUNT THOMA*


RITISH COLUMBIA
MONTANA
R. 23 W.
R. 22 W.
NORTH KISHENEHN
(Park Service)
NORTH
MERIDIAN
Starvation
Kishenehn
Spruce
Mud Lake
Airstrip
Ford
Trailcreek
Tepee Lake
Wedge
Creek
Trail
Mt Hefty
7385
2312
THOMA
BM 7180
2189
Thoma
Tuchuck Mtn
BM 7724
2355
Tuchuck
Cleft Rock
7380
2225
Cleft
PARALLEL
STANDARD
TUCHUCK
Mountain
2285
2221
Yakinikak
Koolah
Seemo
Antley
Frozen Lake
114
114A
210
907
1669
1665
9899
14A
0
2
4 Miles

Elevation gain: 2,917 feet.
Season: July through August.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Glacier View Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, Box W, Columbia Falls, MT 59912, or call (406) 892-2508.

The hike: The Mount Thoma trail lies in an area between Trail Creek Road and the Canadian border west of the North Fork Flathead Road and east of the Whitefish Range.

To get to the trailhead, go north on the North Fork Flathead Road for about forty miles from Hungry Horse to where a prominent sign marks the Trail Creek Road and indicates that the Canadian border is six miles farther. Drive three miles up the Trail Creek Road to the Mount Thoma-Mount Hefty trailhead. Turn right and drive in to where you can park your car.

The trail is clogged, brushy, and plugged with downfall. The trail tread is in poor condition and rather steep in spots for the entire distance to Mount Thoma. There are no streams to cross, and so you'll have to carry enough water for the entire hike.

The period of time this trail is passable is determined by the amount of last winter's snowfall. Expert skiers and persistent snowshoers can climb the trail nearly all year, but casual hikers should wait at least until July. The trail is not heavily used at any time, although hunters use it to some extent in the fall.

Grizzly bears frequent the area but have not been a problem to day hikers. This part of the North Fork of the Flathead is reported to have one of the densest grizzly concentrations in the state, so you'd be wise to keep alert along the trail. Deer and elk are also present, but probably not as conspicuous as the wilderness traveler would like.

The trail starts out in low gear with a moderate climb up through lodgepole pine mixed with larch, spruce, and fir. Soon enough the trail becomes steeper, until it comes out onto the open side of a ridge. With a little extra effort, you can leave the trail and climb the bare ridge to get a view looking east over the Ketchikan drainage and over some low hills into Glacier National Park.

When the trail begins the final ascent to the summit, the climb is much steeper, with no switchbacks to relieve the tedium. Once on top, however, the sweep and magnitude of the view are magnificent. East are the Rockies of Glacier Park, west is the Whitefish Range, north the view is blocked by the bulk of Mount Hefty, and to the northeast one can ponder over the pockmarked landscape of clearcuts adjacent to Waterton National Park. The view is both grandly aesthetic and morbidly educational.

If you have time and strength remaining, you can follow the trail north for another 2.5 miles to the top of Mount Hefty, almost on the Canadian border.

There are no developed campsites near or on the trail, but there are many places to camp if you bring your own water.—*Jack Johns*

HIKE 63 *TEN LAKES*

General description: A moderate 2- or 3-day backpack in a lake-filled alpine basin.
General location: 10 miles northeast of Eureka, on the Canadian border.
Maps: Ksanka Peak and Stahl Peak USGS Quads, and the Kootenai National Forest Map, Rexford Ranger District.
Special attractions: Lots of alpine scenery.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,835 feet.
Elevation loss: 2,210 feet.
Season: Mid-July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rexford Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1299 Highway 93 North, Eureka, MT 59917, or call (406) 296-2536.

The hike: The Ten Lakes Scenic Area receives more than its fair share of snow in the winter, so don't attempt this hike before July 4th. Also, Ten Lakes has a few resident grizzly bears, so follow all the standard precautions for camping in bear country.

To find the trailhead, turn off U.S. Highway 93 eight miles south of Eureka, onto Forest Road #114. After thirteen miles, turn left onto Forest Road #319. Ten miles farther, the Wolverine Flats Road will take off over a bridge on Wigwam Creek to the right. You'll want to park one car up Wolverine Creek and another vehicle at Big Therriault Lake, two miles farther up Forest Road #319.

From Wolverine Creek, Trail #89 will start from the end of an old logging road about one mile northeast of the creek road. The trail climbs steeply at first until it gains the ridge between the Ten Lakes Basin on the north and the Wolverine Flats on the south. The views are expansive in all directions, with glimpses of ranges such as the ice-clad Bugaboos far into Canada.

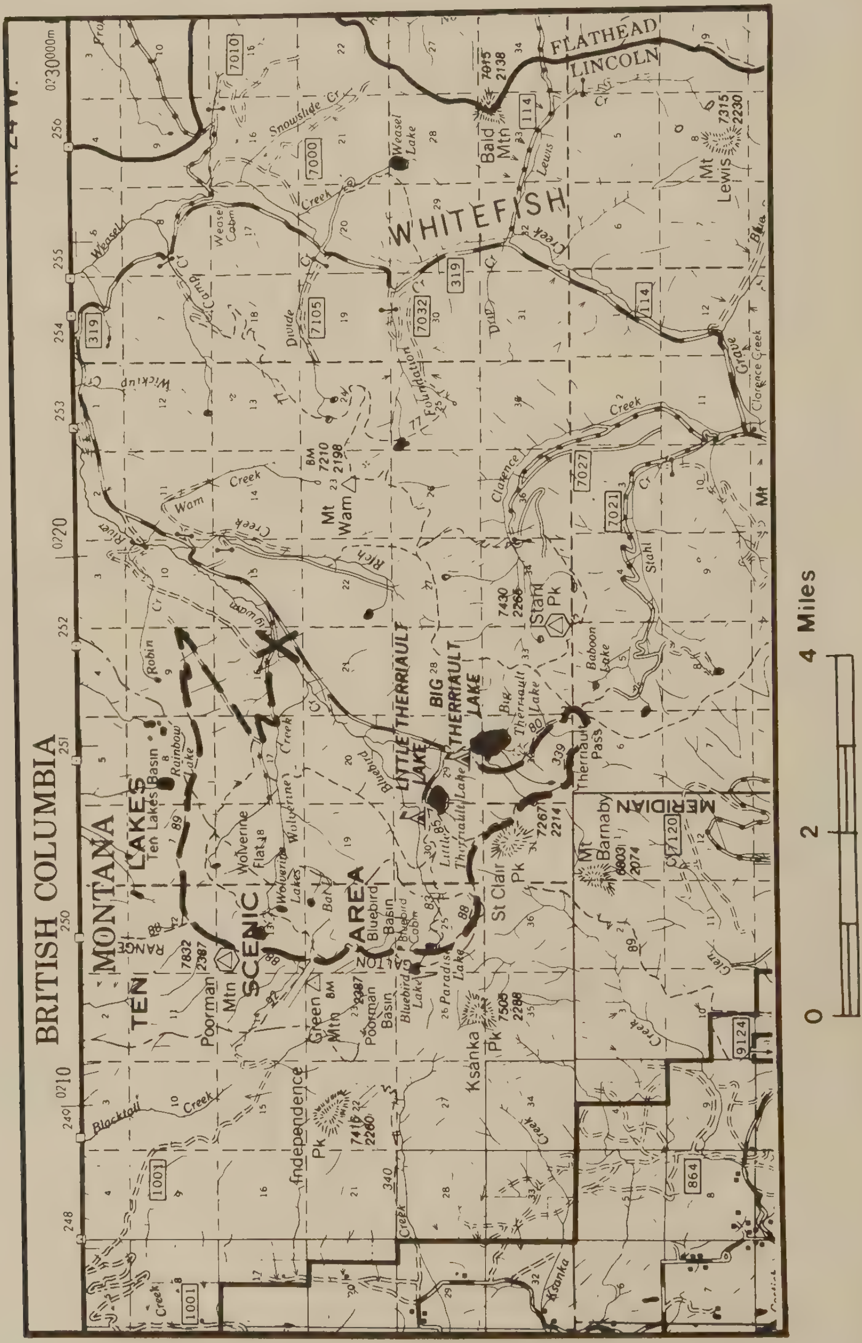
Follow the ridge trail westward and then southward across the slopes of Poorman Mountain and Green Mountain into the Bluebird Lakes Basin.

The trail reaches Bluebird Lake some six miles from the trailhead. This is a good place to camp for the night and fish for dinner. Some of the lakes in this area receive heavy summer use, so try to leave your campsite cleaner than you found it.

Continuing to the southeast across the northern shoulder of St. Clair Peak, Trail #88 (which you've been following from just north of Poorman Mountain) will intersect with Trail #339. Turn right onto #339 for three miles to Therriault Pass.

At the pass, it's worth your while to drop your packs and take an interesting side trip to the top of Stahl Peak to visit the lookout and get a panoramic view of the southern portions of the Ten Lakes region. Keep your eyes open for bighorn sheep, which wander the crags during the summer months. Ernest Thompson Seton, the famous naturalist, wrote of the wild sheep in this area in several of his short stories published around the turn of the century. In fact, his namesake mountain, Mount Thompson Seton, lies some seven miles to the southeast of Stahl Peak.

HIKE 63 *TEN LAKES*


BRITISH COLUMBIA
MONTANA
TEN LAKES SCENIC AREA
Ten Lakes Basin
Rainbow Lake
Wolverine Flat
Wolverine Lakes
Poorman Mtn
7832
2387
Green Mtn
Poorman Basin
Bluebird Basin
Bluebird Cabin
Bluebird Lake
Paradise Lake
Ksanka Pk
7505
2288
St Clair Pk
7267
2214
LITTLE THERRIAULT LAKE
BIG THERRIAULT LAKE
Therriault Pass
Stahl Pk
7430
2265
Baboon Lake
Mt Barnaby
6803
2074
Mt Wam
7210
2198
Weasel Lake
Weasel Cabin
Bald Mtn
7015
2138
Mt Lewis
7315
2230
WHITEFISH
FLATHEAD
LINCOLN
MERIDIAN
GALTON
RANGE
Independence Pk
7416
2260
Blacktail Creek
Wam Creek
Rich Creek
Wickiup Cr
Camp Cr
Snowslide Cr
Divide Cr
Foundation Cr
Clarence Creek
Grave Creek
Stahl Cr
Ksanka Creek
Glen Creek
Weasel
Lewis Creek
Robin Cr
Wolverine Creek
River
319
7010
7000
7105
7032
114
7027
7021
7120
9124
864
1001
340
88
89
4 Miles
2
0
R. 24 W.

Retrace your steps to Therriault Pass, pick up your packs, and continue down Trail #80 to the north, to Big Therriault Lake Campground and your waiting vehicle.

The spectacular scenery and wild country of the Ten Lakes area should prompt you into writing your congressman or senator in support of including the Ten Lakes Wilderness Area in the next wilderness proposal.—*Bill Cunningham*

Glacier National Park

Overview

Glacier National Park was created in 1910, preserving more than one million acres of unspoiled wilderness. More than 730 miles of trails in the park provide access to soaring peaks and verdant forests, mountain meadows, and trout-filled lakes. A hiker's dream, this alpine paradise is preserved forever. Fortunately for the hiker, most visitors to Glacier concentrate near the Going-to-the-Sun road. This leaves vast areas uncrowded and accessible. All camping and hiking in Glacier requires a backcountry permit from a ranger station or visitor center.

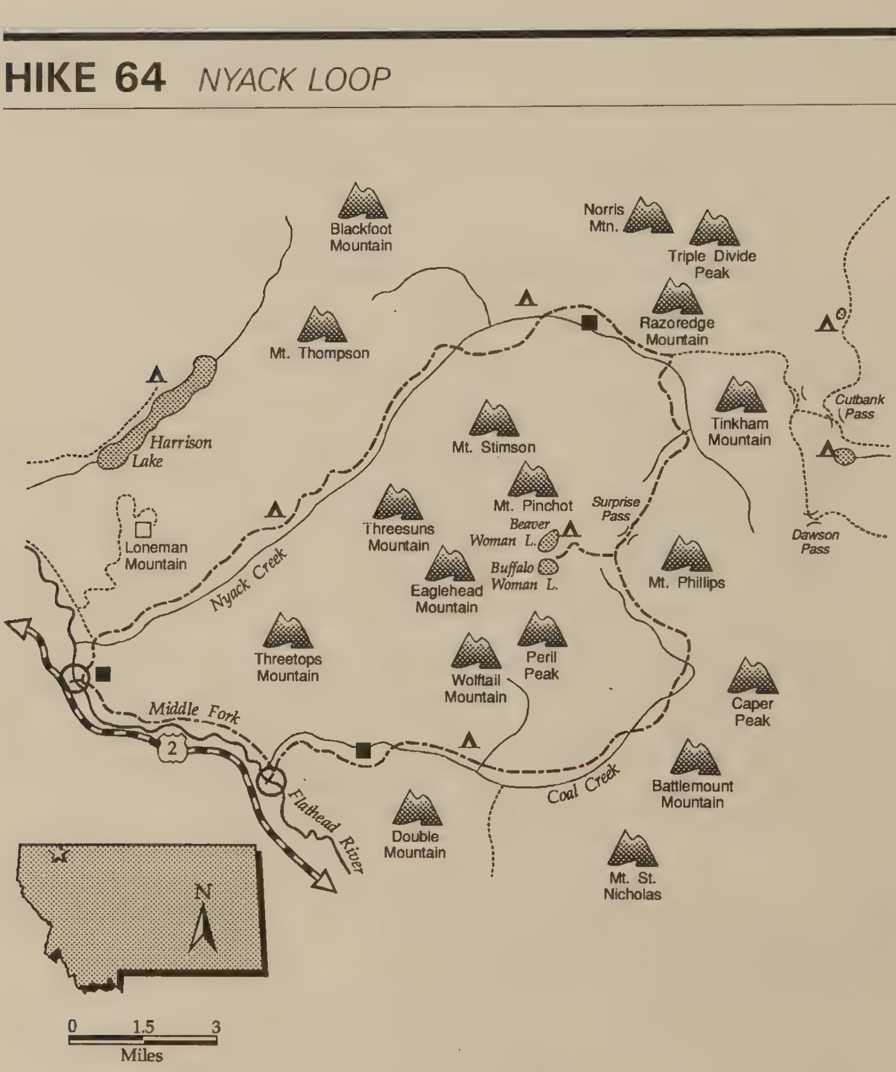
The jagged peaks, lake-filled cirques, and trough-shaped valleys were carved during the last ice age. The glaciation created ideal habitat for large mammals, insects, plants, and birds. Some areas here resemble rain forests more than other coniferous forests of Montana. Glacier is best known for its grizzly bear population, but the rich environment supports many other important species from mosquitos to loons and moose.

HIKE 64 *NYACK LOOP*

General description: A long backpacking expedition for experienced hikers.
General location: 15 miles southeast of West Glacier in the Middle Fork region of Glacier National Park.
Maps: Nyack, Mount Jackson, Mount Stimson, and Mount Saint Nicholas USGS Quads; and the large USGS topo map of the entire park.
Special attraction: A rare opportunity to get away from everything and into the heart of true wilderness.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,260 feet.
Elevation loss: 2,260 feet.
Season: July through August.
For more information: Write Superintendent, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936, or call (406) 888-5441.

The hike: Many trails in Glacier Park are heavily used. Others receive surprisingly little use—even though they host as many backcountry rewards. The Nyack Loop is an excellent example of the latter.

HIKE 64 *NYACK LOOP*


Blackfoot Mountain
Norris Mtn.
Triple Divide Peak
Razoredge Mountain
Mt. Thompson
Harrison Lake
Cutbank Pass
Tinkham Mountain
Mt. Stimson
Mt. Pinchot
Surprise Pass
Beaver Woman L.
Threesuns Mountain
Loneman Mountain
Buffalo Woman L.
Eaglehead Mountain
Mt. Phillips
Dawson Pass
Nyack Creek
Threetops Mountain
Peril Peak
Wolftail Mountain
Caper Peak
Middle Fork
2
Battlemount Mountain
Coal Creek
Flathead River
Double Mountain
Mt. St. Nicholas
N
0
1.5
3
Miles

The trail follows Nyack Creek as it flows over a gorgeous falls and colorful bedrock. Mount Stimson, an incredible hulk of a mountain, dominates the landscape for much of the hike. And wildlife—including the grizzly—is as abundant as in any section of the park.

So what keeps the trail from heavy use or overuse? The hike is long, thirty-five miles or more depending upon how many side trips you take. There's no fishing. And it starts and ends by fording the Middle Fork of the Flathead River.

If you aren't a fanatic angler, can tolerate getting your feet wet, and don't mind long walks, this could turn out to be the backpacking vacation of your life. Plan to take at least three days, but you could easily spend a week on this hike without regretting it.

Another reason the Nyack Loop is infrequently traveled is that it's difficult to find the trailhead and the fords over the Middle Fork. The easiest way to avoid confusion is to stop at or call the Walton Ranger Station for detailed and updated directions and a special handdrawn map of both the Nyack Creek and Coal Creek trailheads.

To start this hike, drive west from Walton Ranger Station until you cross the

The mighty grizzly, king of the wilderness. Doug O'looney photo.

railroad tracks. After this crossing, take the first gravel road to your right. Follow it for a short distance and turn right where it dead-ends, just before the tracks. Drive about another quarter-mile and park. Walk down the road a hundred yards or so, cross the tracks, follow a trail through a cottonwood stand, and then wade the river, keeping your eyes peeled for trail markers on trees on the opposite riverbank.

Leave a vehicle or have somebody pick you up at the Coal Creek trailhead, which is about five miles southeast of Nyack on U.S. Highway 2. Drive from Walton to a small parking area that's a short drive up a gravel road to your left. The trail takes off from the highway and crosses the tracks before merging into an old logging road. Ford the Middle Fork about seventy-five yards south of where the old logging road hits the river.

The trail starts at the abandoned Nyack Ranger Station and crosses Nyack Creek about a mile from the river. The creek is large, and it's crossed by a suspension bridge except in winter, when the bridge is removed. You'll get your feet wet again, as there are other streams to cross in the next few days.

The trail gradually climbs along Nyack Creek all the way to Surprise Pass. It dips down to the stream occasionally but stays high much of the way. Although there are a few dry stretches, you can usually find enough drinking water. The scenery leaves a little to be desired; the scenic highlight may be Nyack Falls with massive Mount Stimson forming the backdrop. In late summer on the way up Surprise Pass you can spend a few hours gorging yourself on huckleberries. Keep very close watch for grizzlies, however, as this entire hike traverses some of the best grizzly habitat left in Montana.

Soon after you drop over Surprise Pass into Coal Creek, a trail to Buffalo Woman and Beaver Woman lakes will jut off to the right. Even if you don't camp here, don't miss these "beautiful women." After the lakes, it's a long, scenic haul down Coal Creek to the Middle Fork. (At this point, you could also walk the Boundary Trail back to the start.)

On such a long hike, you have several side-trip possibilities. You can take the Cut Bank Pass Trail for a good view of much of southern Glacier Park. Perhaps the most popular side trip is a climb up Mount Stimson. Plan to take a full day to climb from timberline to the summit of Stimson and back down again. Although one of the most—if not *the* most—rigorous climbs in the park, it's still nontechnical and within reach of most well-conditioned, experienced hikers.

Leave your fishing pole at home, as Nyack Creek, Coal Creek, Buffalo Woman Lake, and Beaver Woman Lake are all closed to fishing by the National Park Service. You'll need the extra room in your pack for food anyway.

Before taking the hike, be sure to obtain a backcountry camping permit from any park ranger station. You can camp anywhere along the route or in any of four designated campsites. The park service forbids camping near the patrol cabins along this hike. Also check the current park regulations on campfires, as they are often prohibited during dry weather.

As a special precaution, carefully read the section on "Hiking Bear Country" in this book to reduce your chances of encountering a grizzly on unpleasant terms. Remember, this is the big bear's home, and you are the visitor. Behave accordingly.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 65 *AKOKALA LAKE*

General description: A moderate day hike or easy overnighter.
General location: 35 miles north of West Glacier in the North Fork region of Glacier National Park.
Maps: Quartz Ridge and Kintla Peak USGS Quads, the large topographic map of Glacier Park available at retail stores in the area, and the National Park Service brochure/map given to every park visitor.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,105 feet.
Elevation loss: 400 feet.
Season: July to September.
For more information: Write Superintendent, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936, or call (406) 888-5441.

The hike: The North Fork of the Flathead River forms the western boundary of Glacier National Park. Inside the park, there are several lakes that drain into the river, with Akokala being one of the smallest. This hike extends through fairly typical North Fork country, with lodgepole forests and rolling ridges, but without the snowcapped crags found elsewhere in the park.

The trail leaves from the Bowman Lake Campground, which can be found by driving into the park from West Glacier. Shortly after entering the park, turn north onto the Camas Creek Road and stay on this paved highway until it crosses the North Fork of the Flathead and leaves the park.

Immediately after crossing the river, the Camas Creek Road dead-ends at the North Fork Road, a partly paved Forest Service road going all the way to the Canadian border. Turn north onto the North Fork Road and stay on it for about twenty-five miles until you reach Polebridge, which is little more than a general store, a saloon, and a few cabins.

Go through Polebridge and across the river into the park again at the Polebridge Ranger Station. Drive through the ranger station and go about a quarter-mile north until you see a right-hand turn to Bowman Lake. It's six more miles up this gravel road to Bowman Lake Campground.

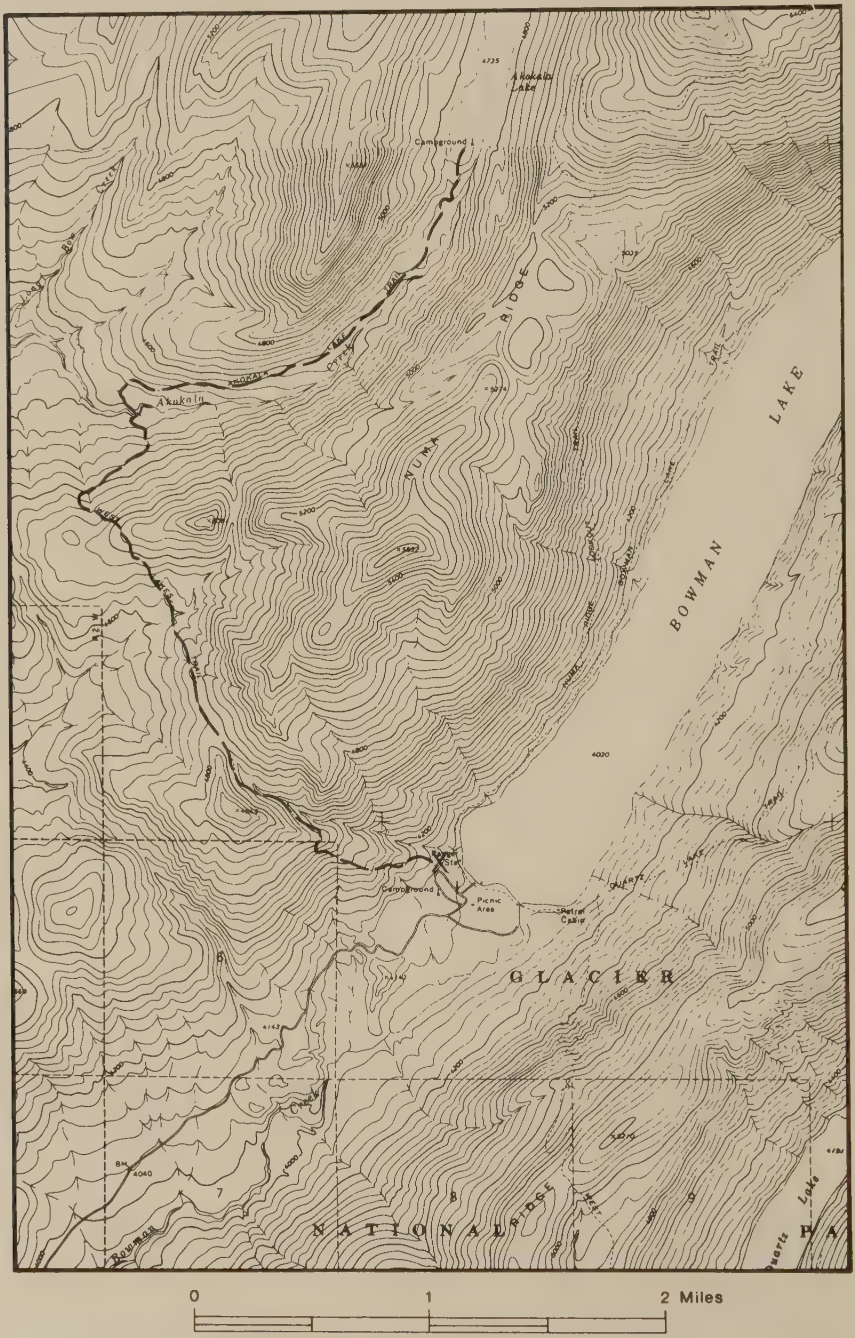
(There is also a road following the North Fork within the park. However, this is longer, slower, and dustier.)

From the campground, it's about 5.6 miles to Akokala Lake on an easy-to-follow trail. You have one big hill near the beginning of the hike and a few more small climbs later on, but it's generally easy all the way, only gaining about six hundred feet in elevation. When you reach Akokala Creek, you might see a trail junction with a trail following the creek. You turn right and follow Akokala Creek upstream to the lake. The left-hand fork is maintained as a fire-access trail and was used on the Red Bench Fire in 1988. It leads through several burned areas.

The first half of this hike can be dry in late summer or early fall, but there's plenty of drinking water during the last half. Be sure to bring your insect repellent—especially in June—as Bowman Lake is almost infamous for its fierce mosquitoes.

Akokala Lake has a good population of cutthroat and Dolly Varden trout.

HIKE 65 *AKOKALA LAKE*



Akokala Lake
Campground
AKOKALA LAKE TRAIL
Akokala Creek
NUMA RIDGE
NUMA RIDGE LOOKOUT TRAIL
BOWMAN LAKE TRAIL
BOWMAN LAKE
4030
WEST SIDE TRAIL
Ranger Sta.
Campground
Picnic Area
Patrol Cabin
QUARTZ LAKE TRAIL
GLACIER
NATIONAL
RIDGE
PA
Bowman Creek
BM 4040
Quartz Lake
0
1
2 Miles

The fishing is best halfway around the left-hand (west) side where the water deepens close to shore.

The only campsite is near the outlet where the trail hits the lake. However, be sure to check with the rangers at Polebridge or Bowman Lake for a backcountry camping permit and updated regulations before leaving on the hike. Fires are often prohibited in this area.

Don't forget you're in Glacier Park grizzly country. So be religious about every possible bear-country precaution and sanitary rule.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 66 *TRAIL OF THE CEDARS*

General description: An interpretive nature trail through a grove of towering cedars.
General location: Off the Going-to-the-Sun road in Glacier National Park.
Maps: Glacier National Park Map.
Special attractions: Avalanche Gorge, giant western redcedars, and view of Mount Cannon.
Difficulty: Easy/wheelchair accessible.
Season: June to September.
Information: Superintendent, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936, or call (406) 888-5441.

The hike: This pocket of old-growth western redcedar and western hemlock has survived while areas nearby have burned. The Avalanche Gorge area is incredibly moist, especially in the spring. Be prepared; take rain gear. This moisture helps protect these trees from the natural wildfires that occur in Glacier National Park. The hemlock and cedars in this area grow four to seven feet in diameter.

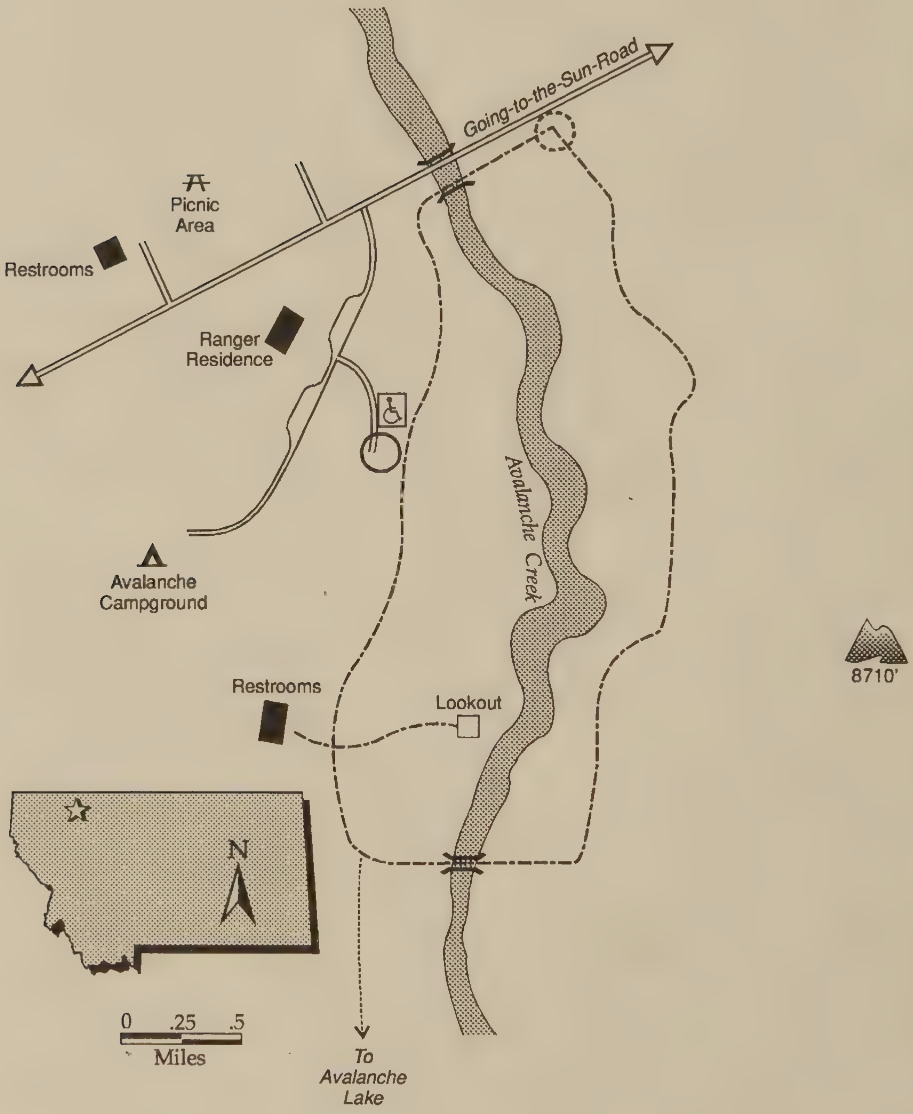
To find the trailhead, drive east of West Glacier for about fourteen miles on the Going-to-the-Sun Highway to Avalanche Campground. Turn right for handicapped parking spaces. Other parking spaces are available along the highway. During peak tourist season, a parking space may be scarce. But more spaces are located south toward the campground. Restrooms and picnic tables are located on the north side of the highway.

The trail is a loop that begins at the highway. It is also accessed via the handicapped parking spaces south of the highway beside the campground. The trail is paved on the west side of Avalanche Creek and a boardwalk on the east side of the creek. Which direction you travel does not matter, but the narrative follows a counter-clockwise direction.

The paved trail heads south on the west side of Avalanche Creek, passing through mostly giant redcedars. These trees leave you in awe, but stay on path. If you want to take a picture next to a big cedar, wait until the other side of the creek. The vegetation around the giant cedars has been trampled by humans.

Next, pass by a small amphitheater used for nature talks, west of the trail. Inquire at the visitor center for information. The trail then reaches wheelchair accessible restrooms on the right (west). From there, a paved trail veers off to the left (east) for a view of Avalanche Creek. Notice the grayish-blue color

HIKE 66 *TRAIL OF THE CEDARS*


Going-to-the-Sun-Road
Picnic Area
Restrooms
Ranger Residence
Avalanche Campground
Avalanche Creek
Restrooms
Lookout
8710'
N
0 .25 .5
Miles
To Avalanche Lake

of the stream. Water from glacial snowmelt contains a fine-grained silt that causes this coloration. From this viewpoint look up to the east to see Mount Cannon.

Back on the main trail continue counter-clockwise for a couple hundred yards. Before crossing the creek, the trail intersects the Avalanche Lake trail coming in from the south. This trail is rugged and not suitable for wheelchair traffic. Though this is a nice day-hike for the ambitious.

The pavement soon turns to a boardwalk, passing over Avalanche Gorge. The gorge was carved from solid rock by the rushing water. The friction from the water has a polishing effect on the rock, creating a natural sculpture.

The boardwalk continues north along the east side of the creek. The path is built around one of the larger cedars. This is a good place for pictures. It gives you a close-up of a western redcedar that is seven feet wide.

There is an additional turnoff on the right and several more interpretive signs. The boardwalk ends at the Going-to-the-Sun Highway. A paved path beside the highway allows you to cross Avalanche Creek again and return to your car.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 67 *PARK CREEK*

General description: An intense 13-mile hike over the spectacular Two Medicine Pass.
General location: Southwest corner of Glacier National Park.
Maps: Squaw Mountain and Mount Rockwell USGS Quads and Glacier National Park Map.
Special attractions: Two Medicine Pass, views of surrounding peaks, Lake Isabel, and Park Creek valley.
Difficulty: Difficult!
Elevation gain: 2,520 ft.
Elevation loss: 2,480 ft.
Season: July to September.
Information: Superintendent, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936, or call (406) 888-5441.

The hike: Besides the scenery, Glacier National Park often conjures up images of motor homes, taillights, or people on every trail; and where Hidden Lake doesn't seem so hidden and wildlife not so wild. But much of the park is truly wild, and you only have to get off the beaten path to experience it. There are three ways to get away from the crowds. First, go somewhere no one wants to go. Second, go somewhere few people know about. Or third, go somewhere that is too hard for most people to go. The third philosophy works for this hike. Upper Park Creek is accessible only by a 14.5 mile flat tedious hike up Park Creek or a thirteen mile grunt over Two Medicine Pass.

To reach the trailhead, drive north from East Glacier on Montana Highway 49 for four miles to Two Medicine Road. Turn left. Follow the road to Two Medicine Lake. The trailhead is on the west end of the boat dock and parking lot near the shoreline.

Remember to obtain a free backcountry permit from a park ranger station the day of or the day before your hike.

The trail leaves the shoreline and stays in the trees, climbing slightly. Several trails intersect the main trail. Stay left at the junction with Paradise Point. Stay right at the junction of Aster Falls trail.

The trail continues west, crossing a suspension bridge. Cross one person at a time for better balance and less stress on the cables. Shortly after crossing Paradise Creek is the intersection of Two Medicine Pass trail. Turn left for Cobalt Lake.

After 3.4 miles, Rockwell Falls offers a good rest stop. Be sure to drink lots of filtered water. The body doesn't always signal soon enough when it's thirsty. Rockwell falls is a series of cascades in the shadow of Sinopah Mountain.

The climb beside Rockwell Falls is fairly steep but short.
Then the hike gradually ascends towards Cobalt Lake. The huckleberry bushes along the way offer a grazing opportunity for savory berries if the season is right. Follow the creek through the fir-clad slopes to within sight of Cobalt Lake. At the intersection turn right for Two Medicine Pass.

The left trail goes to the campground at Cobalt Lake. If you plan to make this an extended trip, consider staying here. In July and August, Cobalt lake has a one-night stay limit.

Again be sure you have enough water for the climb, although snowmelt might provide some relief. The trail gains altitude for the next mile. It is steep so take needed rests. After the climb to the saddle next to Mount Rockwell, the trail remains relatively flat over Chief Lodgepole Peak. From almost any place here, notice the view of Paradise Park down and to the left. And judge for yourself the view to the right. Park Creek valley extends straight and uniformly rounded for as far as the eye can see. This evidence of glaciation along with the cirque containing Lake Isabel across the valley elude to a much more harsh and powerful time.

Check your map to name and count the surrounding peaks. Start with Grizzly Mountain above Paradise Park and work to your right: Eagle Ribs Mountain, Mount Despair, across Park Creek to Statuary Mountain, Vigil Peak above Lake Isabel, Caper Peak, Lone Walker Mountain, and Mount Rockwell. The mountains surround you in divine council.

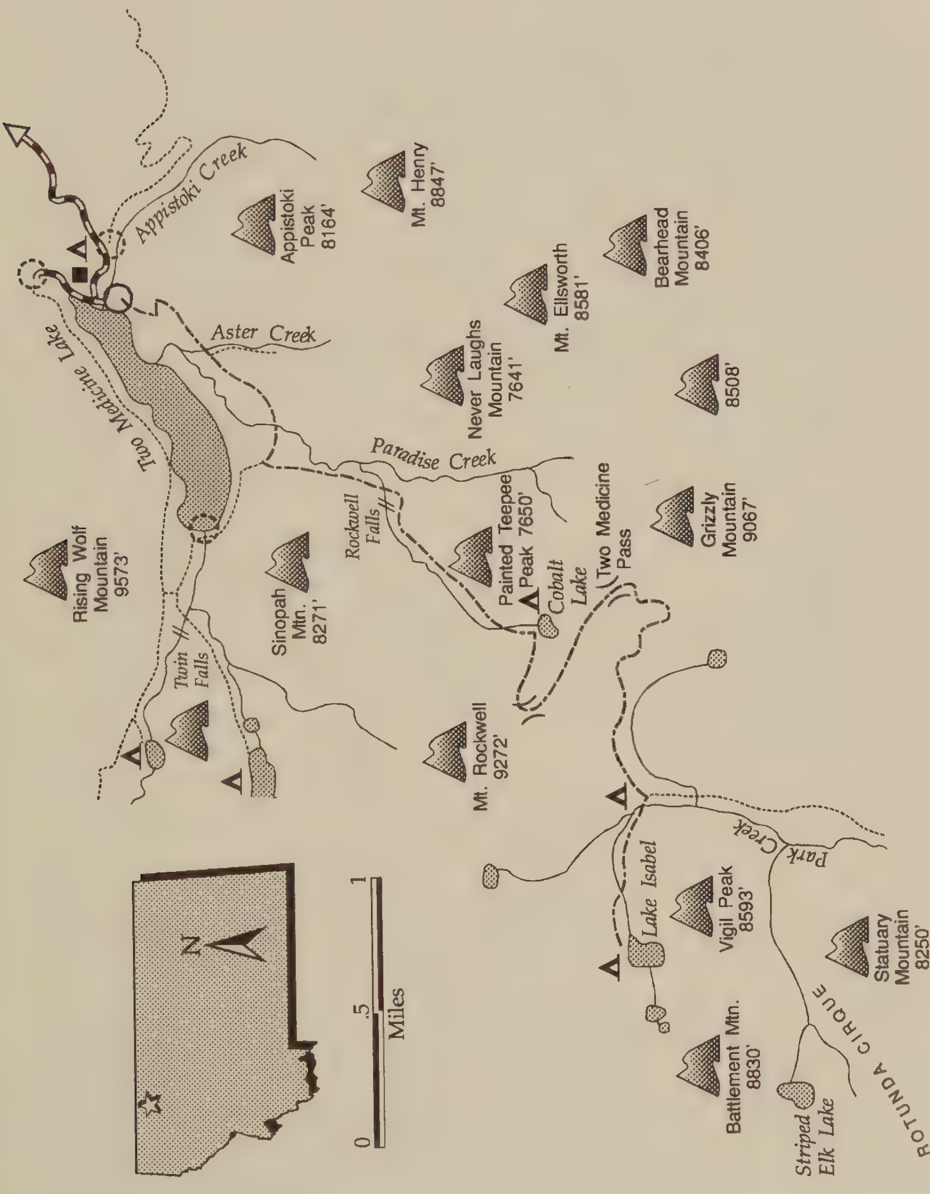
From above Chief Lodgepole Peak continue along the ridge to Two Medicine Pass. Be careful to follow the cairns (rock-pile markers), they mark the trail that drops down and to the right into Park Creek Valley. Also, watch for mountain goats.

The trail descends for almost four miles of easy hiking to the campsite. Though, on the return hike, this is the hardest part. The switchbacks last for about a mile then the trail drops through thick undergrowth of ferns, bushes, and devils club. In places, your feet are not visible.

The campsite is surprisingly pleasant next to Park Creek. The Park Service prohibits fishing on Park Creek, probably due to the high concentration of grizzly bears in the area. The smell of fish entrails might encourage hiker-bear conflicts. This is deep in bear country so read the section on "Hiking in Bear Country" at the front of the guide.

Fisherman may want to journey up to Lake Isabel where the fish bite anything, but you may want an extra day. The campsite at Lake Isabel is as good as they get in Glacier. It is possible to hike into Isabel in one day. Lake Isabel is an extra 2.3 miles uphill. Though if you expend all that energy you

HIKE 67 *PARK CREEK*


Appistoki Creek
Appistoki Peak 8164'
Mt. Henry 8847'
Two Medicine Lake
Aster Creek
Bearhead Mountain 8406'
Mt. Ellsworth 8581'
Never Laughs Mountain 7641'
8508'
Paradise Creek
Rising Wolf Mountain 9573'
Rockwell Falls
Painted Teepee Peak 7650'
Two Medicine Pass
Grizzly Mountain 9067'
Cobalt Lake
Sinopah Mtn. 8271'
Twin Falls
Mt. Rockwell 9272'
Lake Isabel
Park Creek
Vigil Peak 8593'
Statuary Mountain 8250'
Battlement Mtn. 8830'
Striped Elk Lake
ROTUNDA CIRQUE
N
0
.5
1
Miles

might want to stay a while. The water is clear; and Vigil Peak is friendly. The rainbow trout are all around twelve inches long and fun to catch.

The return hike is tough. Carry and drink plenty of water. Even without a visit to Lake Isabel, the round-trip hike climbs 5,000 feet.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 68 *PITAMAKAN AND DAWSON PASSES*

General description: A 2- or 3-day hike to two mountain lakes and over two spectacular mountain passes.
General location: On the east side of Glacier National Park, about 12 miles northwest of East Glacier.
Maps: Cut Bank Pass and Mount Rockwell USGS Quads (Kiowa and Squaw mountains cover the first 2 miles). The USGS also publishes a large contour map of the entire Glacier Park. Of additional help is the Backcountry Map and Trail Guide available at no charge from the National Park Service at all ranger stations.
Special attractions: Crossing the Continental Divide twice, this trail offers at least five separate panoramic views.

Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,935 feet.
Elevation loss: 2,935 feet.
Season: July through August.
For more information: Write Superintendent, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936, or call (406) 888-5441.

The hike: The trailhead is at the outlet of Two Medicine Lake. From the town of East Glacier, drive north on Montana Highway 49 about four miles to a well-marked turnoff onto the Two Medicine Road. Drive to the end of the Two Medicine Road and park in the lot near the ranger station.

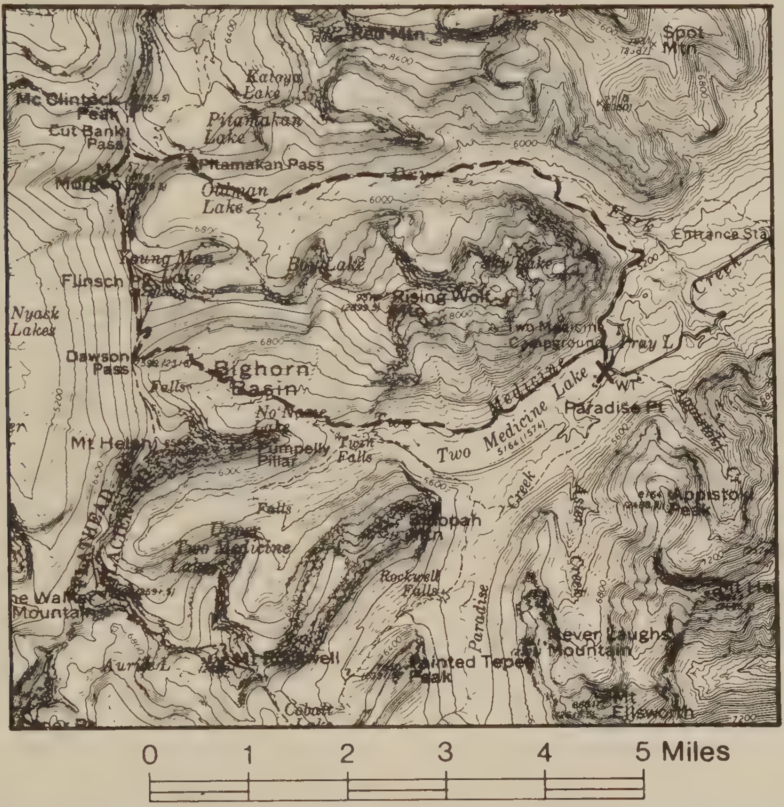
Note these two points: **1)** In order to camp at Oldman and/or No Name lakes, you must have a backcountry camping permit, which can be secured the day before or the day of your hike at any park ranger station; **2)** This is a loop trail and can be taken in the reverse direction from the way it is described below.

From the parking lot, cross the bridge below Pray Lake and turn right at the marked trail junction. The first segment of the trail stretches a little less than six miles to Oldman Lake. In the first two miles, you move around the base of towering Rising Wolf Mountain and across the bridge over Dry Fork Creek to a marked trail junction, where you turn left (west). From here, you face a steady climb up an open valley. Very wet Dry Fork Creek cascades the length of the valley, while several smaller streams drop out of hidden cirques to add to the volume. Paintbrush and lupine add splashes of color to the scene.

At the head of the valley, you enter a thick forest prone to blowdowns. The trail splits shortly before Oldman Lake. The right fork heads directly for Pitamakan Pass while the left leads to the campsites on the lake.

The National Park Service has four designated campsites in the timber by the lake. Wood fires are not permitted, and an outhouse stands nearby.

HIKE 68 *PITAMAKAN AND DAWSON PASSES*


Red Mtn
Spot Mtn
Katoya Lake
McClintock Peak
Cut Bank Pass
Pitamakan Lake
Pitamakan Pass
Mt Morgan
Oldman Lake
Dry
Fork
Entrance Sta
Creek
Young Man Lake
Flinsch Pk
Boy Lake
No Shoes Lake
Rising Wolf
Nyack Lakes
Two Medicine Campground
Pray L
Dawson Pass
Bighorn Basin
Falls
No Name Lake
Two Medicine Lake
WT
Paradise Pt
Mt Helen
Pumpelly Pillar
Twin Falls
Two Medicine
Creek
Appistoki Peak
Sinopah Mtn
Upper Two Medicine Lake
Rockwell Falls
Paradise
Walton Mountain
Never Laughs Mountain
Aurice L
Mt Rockwell
Painted Tepee Peak
Mt Ellsworth
Cobalt
0
1
2
3
4
5 Miles

Campers are required to use the designated sites to minimize man's impact on this beautiful spot.

Flinsch Peak dominates the western skyline. You may see a family of beavers at the far end of the lake in the twilight hours. Twenty-inch cutthroat cruise the shoreline. And on the northern slopes above the lake, a white cloud of beargrass stands as thick as anywhere in the park in late July.

The area around Oldman Lake seems to be natural habitat for grizzlies. Chances are slim of seeing one of the great bruins, let alone having any trouble, but play it safe. It's really their turf. Read over "Hiking Bear Country" in the front of this book before taking this hike.

From Oldman Lake to No Name Lake is a distance of about 7.5 miles; almost all of the area traversed by the trail is dry by early August, so carry water. Some hikers elect to bypass the camp at No Name Lake and hike all the way out on the second day. This makes for a long day, partly because this segment of the hike begins with an elevation gain of 1,400 feet.

To reach Pitamakan Pass from Oldman Lake, take the short cutoff trail almost straight north from the outhouse instead of going back to the trail junction.

An elk calf, part of the Glacier Park herd, browses in a grassy-alpine meadow. Micheal S. Sample photo.

The climb to Pitamakan is short and steep—1,000 feet up in about a mile. You'll find that the pass is actually a saddle in a ridge. Before turning left (west) to follow the trail up the ridge, pause for a look down at Pitamakan Lake, 800 feet below you.

Very quickly after leaving the saddle, you'll encounter two well-marked junctions in the trail; in each case take the trail to the left. Less then a mile from Pitamakan Pass, you cross the Continental Divide. Due west stands mighty Mount Stimson, rising 6,000 feet above the Nyack Creek Valley.

From here, the trail goes in a southerly direction, paralleling the Continental Divide along the shoulders of Mount Morgan and Flinsch Peak to Dawson Pass, where you cross the divide again. While nearly level through this section, the trail traverses steep slopes of "roller bearing" scree, which is dangerous when wet. Because dangerous snow bands lie across these slopes until late June or early July, the park service opens this trail later than most. Check with the Two Medicine Ranger Station before planning an early trip.

Dawson Pass is a favorite hangout for mountain goats, which are quite tame in this region. Dawson is also a favorite jumping-off spot for people who wish to make the steep walk up the south face of Flinsch Peak.

From Dawson Pass, the trail drops very rapidly through Bighorn Basin to No Name Lake. The lake deserves a more descriptive "no-name," for it lies at the base of sheer Pumpelly Pillar. It's an evocative pool, especially in the first moments of sunlight on a quiet morning.

At No Name Lake, there's a cluster of three campsites (no wood fires) and a nearby outhouse. The campsites are near the creek just before it empties into the lake. Like Oldman Lake, this area is quite "buggy" in July—bring some bug dope.

A fishing rod isn't of much use here. For some reason, the tiny trout that dimple the surface of the lake haven't made it big in recent years.

Leaving No Name Lake, you move down the valley about two miles to a trail junction. The left fork goes along the north shore of Two Medicine Lake three miles to the trailhead. The right fork goes only a short distance to another junction, where you can either turn west a short distance to Twin Falls or east to the head of the lake, where a boat picks up paying customers from the dock to return to the foot of the lake. If interested in a boat ride (which cuts about two miles off the last leg of this trip), inquire about the schedule at the boat concession stand near the trailhead before beginning the hike. *—Mike Sample*

HIKE 69 *ICEBERG LAKE*

General description: A 9-mile, round-trip day hike to a beautiful lake in a spectacular setting.
General location: On the east side of Glacier National Park, twelve miles west of Babb.
Special attraction: High probability of seeing mountain goats and other wildlife.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,194 feet.
Season: July to September.
For more information: Write Superintendent, Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936, or call (406) 888-5441.

Special caution: Of all the hikes in this book, this one is probably the most dangerous in terms of possible encounters with grizzlies.

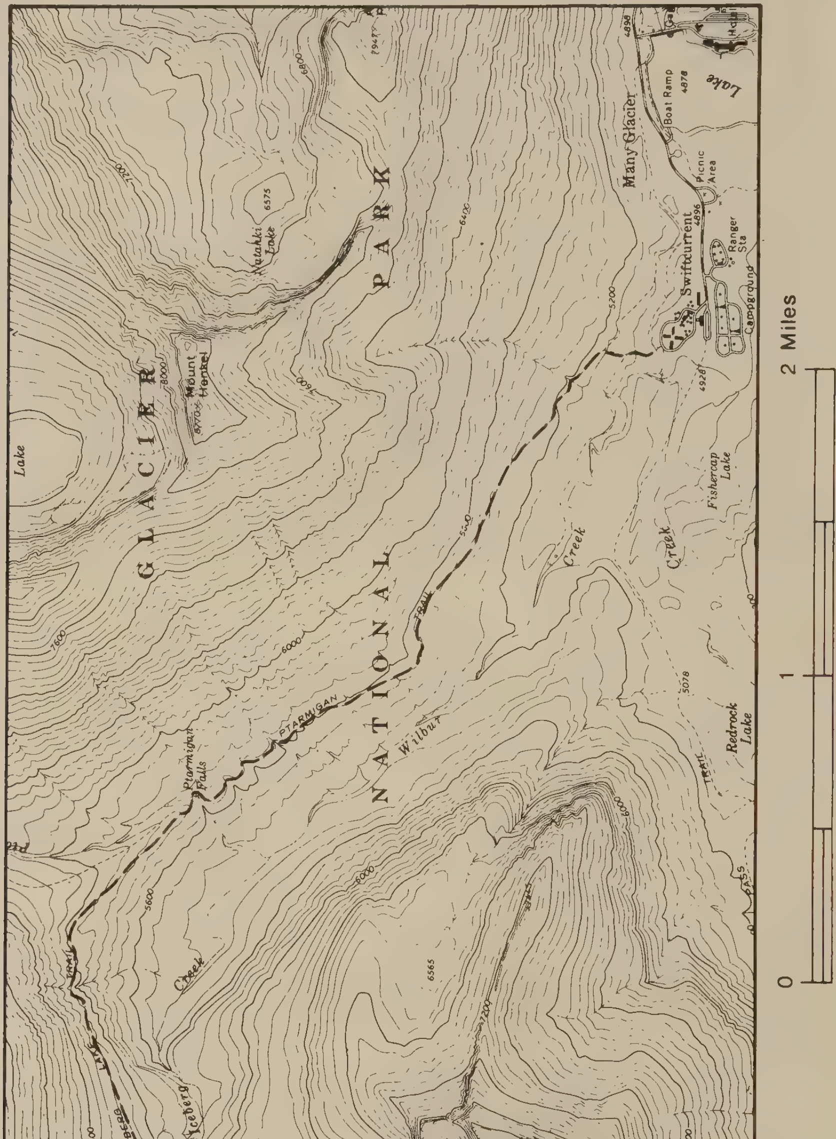
The hike: Technically, Iceberg Lake doesn't have icebergs, but it comes as close as any place in Montana. Chunks of ice float around in the lake, usually until September. However, the "icebergs" are larger and more scenic in July and August.

Find the trailhead by driving along the eastern boundary of Glacier National Park eight miles north from St. Mary to Babb and then twelve miles west into the park to Many Glacier. The trail starts from a parking lot behind Swiftcurrent Motel. Or you can join the trail at the north side of the bridge over the outlet of Swiftcurrent Lake.

Except for a short section at the very beginning, this trail climbs only two hundred feet per mile, a rate most people find comfortable. Wide and relatively smooth, the trail leads through fields of wildflowers. Large flickers with pronounced reddish coloring and swooping flight patterns nest in the ghost trees along the trail.

At the 2.5-mile mark, you pass lovely Ptarmigan Falls as it plunges over rocky layers to a deep emerald pool. Shortly thereafter, a clearly marked trail junction indicates a right turn for those wishing to see Ptarmigan Lake and Tunnel—and willing to make the stiff, 2.5-mile climb to get there. The Iceberg Lake trail goes straight for another 2.5 miles to the lake, making this a ten-mile round-trip.

HIKE 69 *ICEBERG LAKE*


GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
Many Glacier
Swiftcurrent
Lake
Boat Ramp
4878
4898
Picnic Area
4896
Ranger Sta
Campground
4928
Fishercap Lake
Redrock Lake
5078
Creek
Wilbur Creek
Mount Henkel
8770±
Natahki Lake
6575
Lake
Ptarmigan Falls
PTARMIGAN TRAIL
Iceberg Creek
ICEBERG LAKE TRAIL
Iceberg Lake
6094
Mount Wilbur
6565
5200
5600
6000
6400
6800
7200
7600
8000
0
1
2 Miles

During the summer, the National Park Service installs a bridge over Iceberg Creek just before the lake. However, this bridge is removed each fall to prevent it from washing out in the spring.

On the last segment of this hike, mountain goats and bighorn sheep are commonly seen on the grassy slopes above and to the right. Like the rest of Swiftcurrent Valley, this is prime grizzly habitat. Be alert and make noise. You may sacrifice solitude, but it would be safer to take this trip with a group. A park-service ranger conducts walks almost every morning in July and August.—*Mike Sample*

The Rocky Mountain Front, Scapegoat Wilderness

Overview

These areas form the east and southern boundaries of the Bob Marshall Ecosystem. Driving north on U.S. Highway 287, you can see the massive limestone ramparts of the Rocky Mountain Front. It is easy to imagine the wonder and magic of seeing those far off mountains for the first time.

It may surprise you that no part of the Rocky Mountain Front is protected by wilderness designation. Just one look leaves you thinking there might not be a more scenic area to preserve. For years, conservationist have tried to protect these areas, and the fight lingers on.

However, the Scapegoat Wilderness to the south protects habitat for big game, raptors, and mountain lions. Rushing streams and huge lowland meadows provide scenery below the never-ending mountains. The Scapegoat is part of a belt formation of mountains running from Helena north to Canada.

HIKE 70 GATEWAY PASS, GATEWAY GORGE

General description: A 3-day hike for experienced hikers.
General location: 20 miles west of Dupuyer in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.
Maps: Swift Reservoir, Gateway Pass, Gooseberry Park, and Morningstar Mountain USGS Quads; and the Lewis & Clark National Forest Map (Rocky Mountain Division).
Special attractions: Spectacular scenery—and lots of it.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 1,600 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Lewis & Clark National Forest, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, or call (406) 466-5341.

The hike: An experienced hiker could make this thirty-two-mile trip in three days, but the scenery is so spectacular that you may want to stay longer.

The trailhead is easily located by turning west off U.S. Highway 89 at Dupuyer onto a gravel Forest Service road. Follow this road for eighteen miles until you reach Swift Dam. Then take the road to the right that passes in front of the dam and goes along the north side of the reservoir. The trail starts at the end of this road. After a heavy rain, the road along the reservoir may be impassable, and you'll have to add an extra two miles to your trip by walking to the trailhead.

After climbing onto a small knob, the trail follows the South Fork of Birch Creek, gradually climbing through thick forests of Douglas-fir with a few meadows rich in wildflowers. You reach Gateway Pass at the fourteen-mile mark. The trail stays high, and in another mile you reach Big River Meadows, a great campsite surrounded by open hillsides and alpine panoramas.

From here the trail drops gradually along Gateway Creek and through awesome Gateway Gorge. It's about four miles from Big River Meadows to the Strawberry Creek Trail. After leaving the gorge, take the Strawberry Creek Trail north to the East Fork Trail, which puts you about twenty miles into the hike and at a good second campsite.

From the Strawberry Creek/East Fork Trail junction, the trail climbs easily through forests and meadows for about six miles along the creek to Badger Pass, where the scenery is hard to equal. From that high point, the trail climbs another six hundred feet before dropping into the North Fork of Birch Creek. The trail then follows this stream, which features very interesting rock formations and little waterfalls. One side drainage has a sheer rock wall similar to those found in the canyonlands of southern Utah. After eight miles of easy hiking, you come out on the north shore of Swift Reservoir where you started.

The trail is well-used and easy to follow. It has several rocky sections, and the stream crossings can be tricky, especially after a good rain or early in the summer of a heavy snow year. The trail along Strawberry Creek has a few boggy sections.

The overall elevation gain is 1,600 feet. Water is available throughout the trip, and mosquitoes usually aren't a problem after June. It's best to wait until July anyway, so the passes will be free of snow.

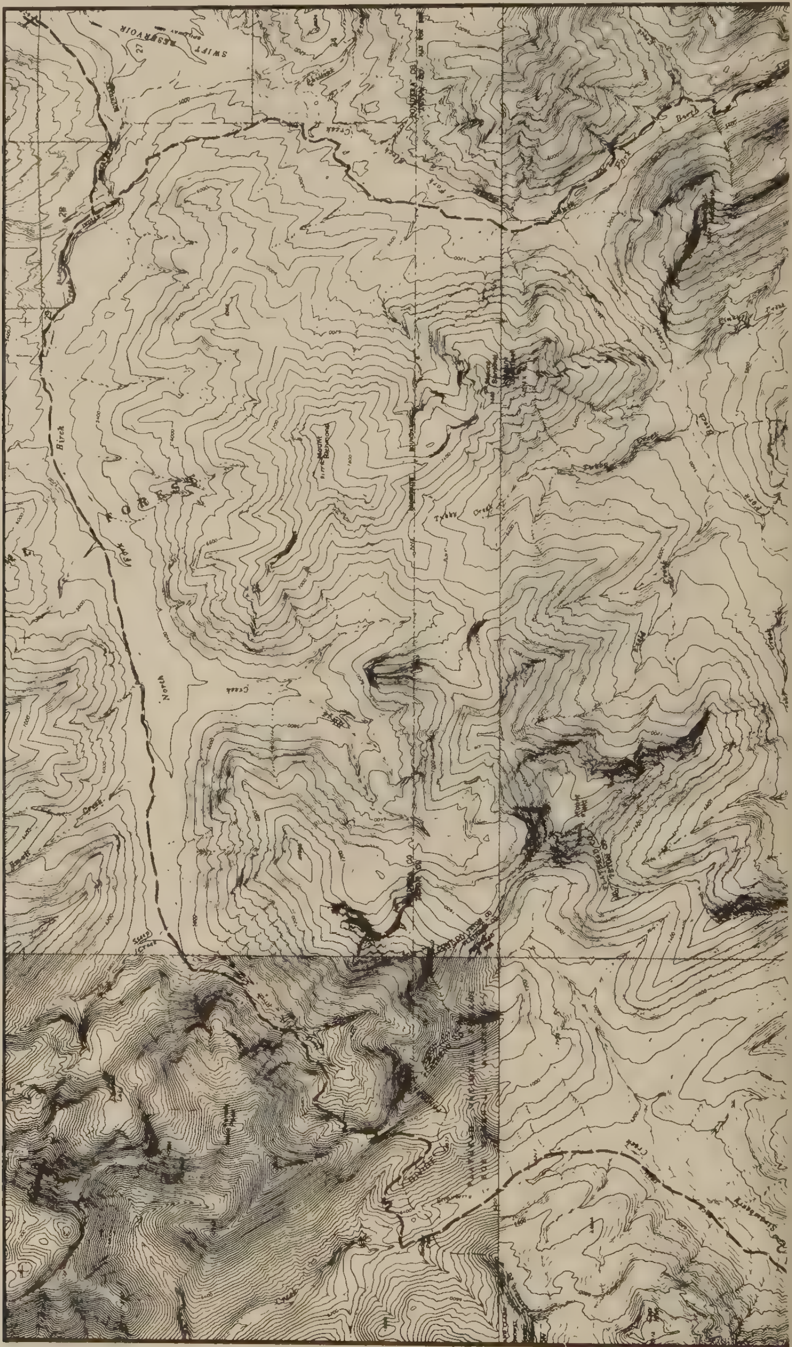
Although grizzly bears inhabit this area, hunting pressure keeps them very wary of man. So the chance of an incident is as remote as this trail.

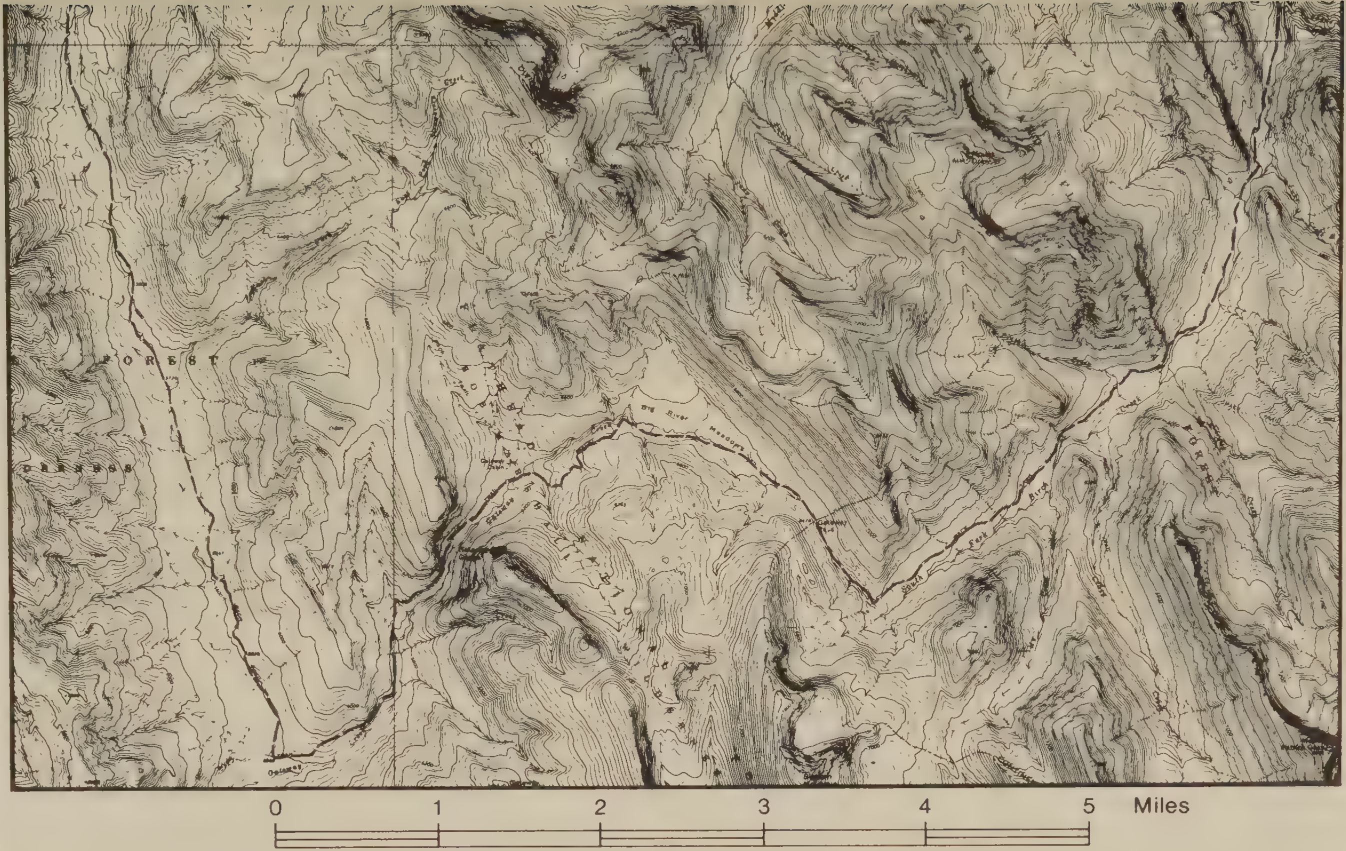
This hike has dozens of possible campsites, but Big River Meadows and a site at the Strawberry Creek/East Fork Trail junction are two top choices. Both have good water supplies. Big River Meadows has the edge on scenery, but you must haul firewood from the edge of the meadow. Strawberry Creek has plenty of firewood.

Nearly all of this hike is in the spectacular Rocky Mountain Front addition to the Bob Marshall Wilderness, designated in 1978. Although Gateway Gorge is probably the highlight of the trip, you won't be disappointed in the rest of the hike, which is probably one of the most beautiful in Montana.—*Elaine and Art Sedlack*

Backcountry visitor meets backcountry resident. Mike Sample photo.

HIKE 70 *GATEWAY PASS, GATEWAY GORGE*


SWIFT RESERVOIR
Birch
North
Creek
Steep Creek


FOREST
Big River Meadows
South Fork Bird
Creek
0
1
2
3
4
5
Miles

HIKE 71 *OUR LAKE*

General description: A 7-mile round-trip suitable for a day or overnight hike.
General location: 29 miles west of Choteau in the Rocky Mountain Front.
Maps: Our Lake USGS Quad and the Lewis & Clark National Forest Map (Rocky Mountain Division).
Special attractions: A very pristine mountain lake with good fishing, and mountain goats inhabiting the slopes above the lake.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,500 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Lewis & Clark National Forest, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, or call (406) 466-5341.

The hike: This is a popular overnight or day hike with a well-maintained trail, outstanding scenery, good fishing, and excellent opportunities to view wildlife.

To find the trailhead, drive north from Choteau on U.S. Highway 89 for five miles before turning west onto County Road #144, which follows the Teton River. Follow this paved road, which doesn't cross the river, for about fifteen miles until you see the sign for Ear Mountain Ranger Station. Here, turn south on County Road #109 (South Fork Road). Cross the Teton River and follow the South Fork of the Teton River for nine miles until the road ends. Take Trail #184, which begins where the road ends.

Although it's only 3.5 miles to Our Lake (sometimes called Hidden Lake), expect a fair climb, as the trail climbs 1,500 feet to the lake.

The last half-mile to the lake switchbacks up a steep slope that can be hazardous if tried before the snowbanks disappear. It's best to wait until July or August to try this hike.

Motorized vehicles are banned on this trail, and other signs of man are uncommon. Mosquitoes aren't much of a problem except some years in June. Bears are common in the area. There is a good source of water at about the three-mile mark, but the rest of the trail is dry, especially in late August and September.

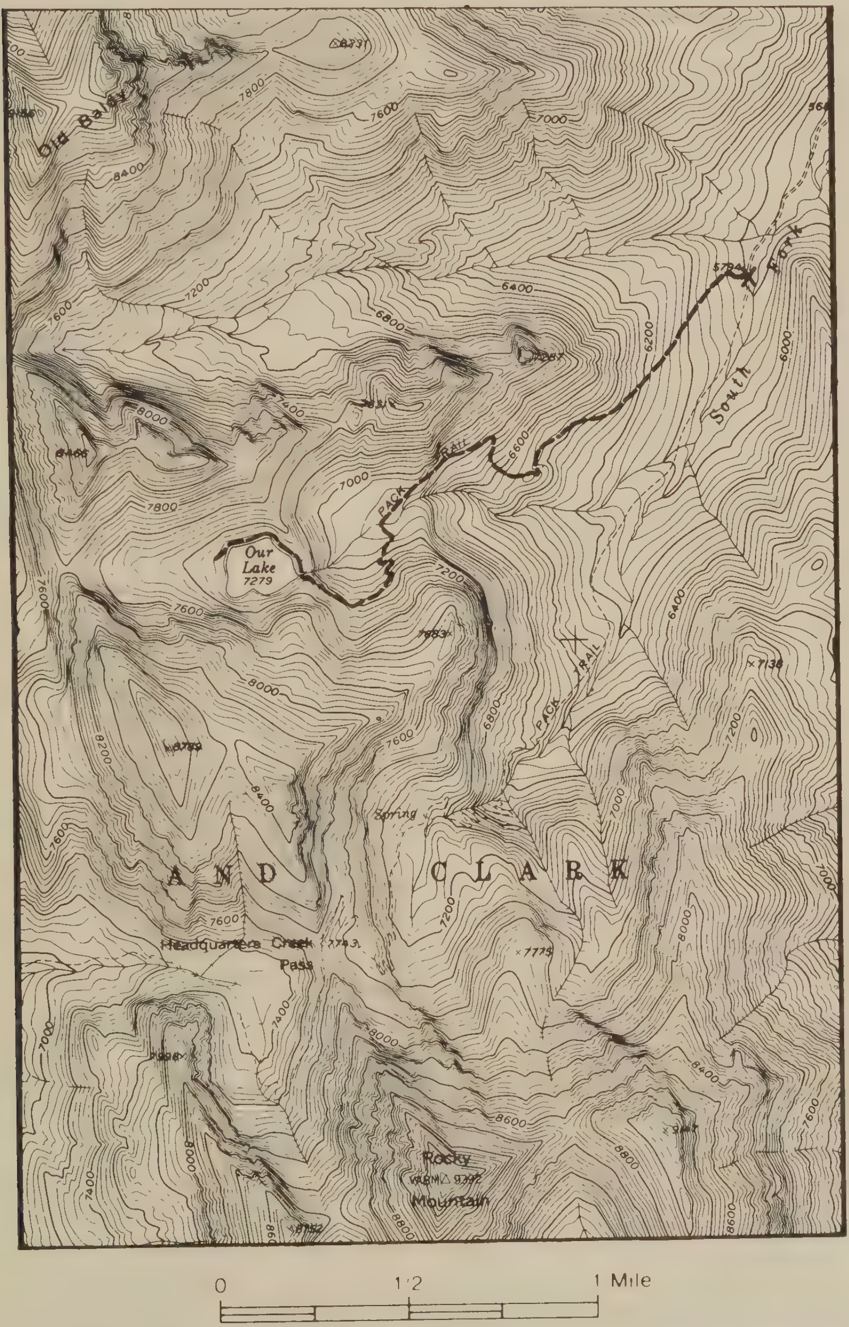
You can almost always spot mountain goats on the alpine slopes behind Our Lake. If you're lucky, you may also see bighorn sheep near Rocky Mountain, the highest peak in the Bob Marshall Wilderness (9,392 feet). In addition, expect to see marmots and pikas. Asters, daisies, and lupine seem to prevail among the abundant supply of wildflowers along this trail. Skunkflower is common on the alpine slopes above the lake.

The Forest Service recommends camping below the waterfall about half a mile before the lake. The basin was burned somewhat by the Gates Creek Fire in 1988, but the area around the lake itself was spared entirely.

Since access is easy, the lake is heavily used at times. Still, the fishing remains good. Ten-inch rainbows make up most of the catch. The lake also has cutthroat trout, but they're harder to catch.

For moderately experienced hikers, there's a good side trip to the saddle west of the lake above the basin. From this saddle, you can view the Chinese

HIKE 71 *OUR LAKE*



Old Baldy
8231
7800
7600
7000
8400
7200
6400
6800
6200
5794
South Fork
6000
8467
8000
7400
8466
6600
PACK TRAIL
7000
7800
Our Lake 7279
7600
7200
7683
6400
7138
8000
PACK TRAIL
8200
8789
7600
6800
8400
Spring
7000
AND CLARK
7200
8000
7600
Headquarters Creek Pass
7743
7775
7400
7000
7938
8000
8400
8600
9247
Rocky Mountain
VABM 9392
8800
8782
8600
7600
0
1/2
1 Mile

Wall, the backbone of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The distance to the saddle is about three-fourths of a mile.

This spectacular mountain country is part of the Teton Peaks Special Management Area and is designated as roadless.—*Dave Orndoff*

HIKE 72 *RENSHAW MOUNTAIN, RENSHAW LAKE*

General description: A pleasant 2-day hike through a proposed addition to the Bob Marshall Wilderness.
General location: 20 miles west of Augusta.
Maps: Patricks Basin, Pretty Prairie, Double Falls, Wood Lake, and Benchmark USGS Quads; and the Lewis & Clark National Forest Map (Rocky Mountain Division).
Special attractions: A subalpine lake with good fishing, plus expansive views of the Rocky Mountain Front.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 3,229 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,052 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, or call (406) 466-5341.

The hike: This easy twelve-mile hike passes through a variety of terrain in the Rocky Mountain Front and offers some good lake fishing as well. You'll need two vehicles to do this hike properly, leaving one at the Benchmark Creek trailhead along the Benchmark Road and another near the Willow Creek Work Station at the start of the trek.

To reach Willow Creek, take Forest Road #235 twenty miles west from Augusta. Just outside the Forest boundary, FR #235 turns left and becomes Benchmark Road. Forest Service Road #233 proceeds straight ahead for about one mile to the Willow Creek turnoff. With luck and no mud, you can turn left at the Scoutana Girls Ranch into Willow Creek and drive two miles to a gate on private land where the trail starts. The other vehicle should be driven down Benchmark Road for another fifteen miles to where the Benchmark Creek Trail comes in on the right.

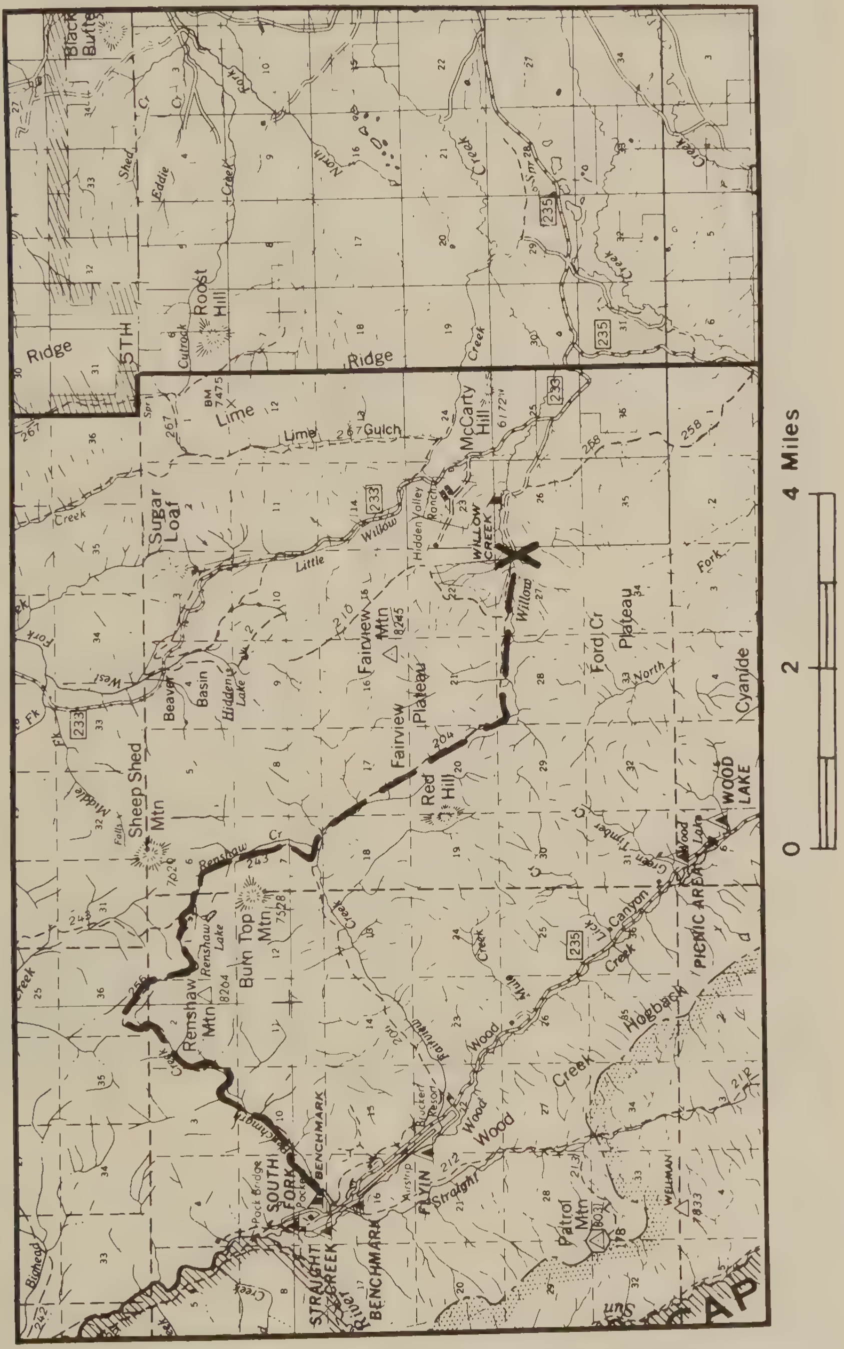
Back at Willow Creek, go through the gate (remembering to close it!) and follow Trail #204 past the private inholding. The country gets interesting at the very beginning, as the trail climbs up Willow Creek Canyon past a series of beautiful waterfalls. To the north is the bulk of Fairview Mountain, one of the higher peaks along the Rocky Mountain Front. Don't drink from Willow Creek; cattle usually graze in its headwaters up in the high country.

Past Willow Creek Canyon, the trail passes through the flower-covered Fairview Plateau, a favorite haunt for bighorn sheep and elk. The plateau and nearby Patricks Basin are prime grizzly habitat, so keep your eyes open and your camp clean.

Crossing the plateau, the trail drops into the headwaters of Fairview Creek and offers attractive views of Renshaw Mountain to the northwest.

Just past a crossing of a side stream (Renshaw Creek), there is a junction

HIKE 72 *RENSHAW MOUNTAIN, RENSHAW LAKE*


Black Butte
Roost Hill
Ridge
5TH
Ridge
BM 7475
Lime
Lime Gulch
McCarty Hill
6172
235
233
Sugar Loaf
Little Willow
Hidden Valley Ranch
WILLOW CREEK
Willow
Fairview Mtn
8245
Fairview Plateau
Beaver Basin
Hidden Lake
Sheep Shed Mtn
Renshaw Cr
Red Hill
Burn Top Mtn
7528
Renshaw Lake
Renshaw Mtn
8264
Ford Cr Plateau
North Fork
Cyanide
WOOD LAKE
PICNIC AREA
Lick Canyon Creek
Hogback
Wood Creek
Straight
Bucket Resort
Airstrip
FLYIN
BENCHMARK
SOUTH FORK
STRAIGHT CREEK
Patrol Mtn
WELLMAN
7833
0
2
4 Miles

Wild trout add to a backcountry vacation. Bill Schneider photo.

with Trail #243. Turn left (south) onto this trail, which goes uphill for several miles to Renshaw Lake. It's easy to walk past the lake on the trail, so use your topo map to guide you up to the lake on one of the many side trails that lead about one hundred yards and fifty feet up to the lake basin.

Renshaw Lake is one of the very few subalpine lakes in the Rocky Mountain Front. It's used as a base camp for hunters in the fall and gets visited by a few trail bikers. Lewis and Clark National Forest personnel haven't closed this fragile area to motorized vehicles. The possibility of a recent winter kill may make fishing a challenge, but it's worth a try.

After leaving the lake, turn left up the trail to a low divide between Renshaw Creek and Lang Creek. Here a lightly marked trail (#256 on the Forest Service map) takes off uphill to the left. For about one hundred feet it seems to go straight up, but once you gain the northern shoulder of Renshaw Mountain, the worst is over. The peak of Renshaw Mountain is an easy scramble to the south, and the trail itself offers great views of the Deep Creek Mountains along the Rocky Mountain Front to the north.

One more scenic attraction awaits you as the trail dips into an unusual limestone gorge as it descends Benchmark Creek.

If you're impressed with the country along this hike, you'll be glad to know that all of it has been recommended as an addition to the Bob Marshall Wilderness by the Forest Service. Give the folks of the Bob Marshall Alliance a hand, and write your congressman asking that the Renshaw area be added to the wilderness system.—*Ed Madej and Rosemary Rowe*

HIKE 73 *MOUNT WRIGHT*

General description: A walk up to an old fire lookout with tremendous views.
General location: 30 miles west of Choteau.
Maps: Wright USGS Quad and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Map (Rocky Mountain Division).
Special attraction: One of the best mountaintop views of the northern Bob Marshall Wilderness.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 3,237 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, or call (406) 466-5341.

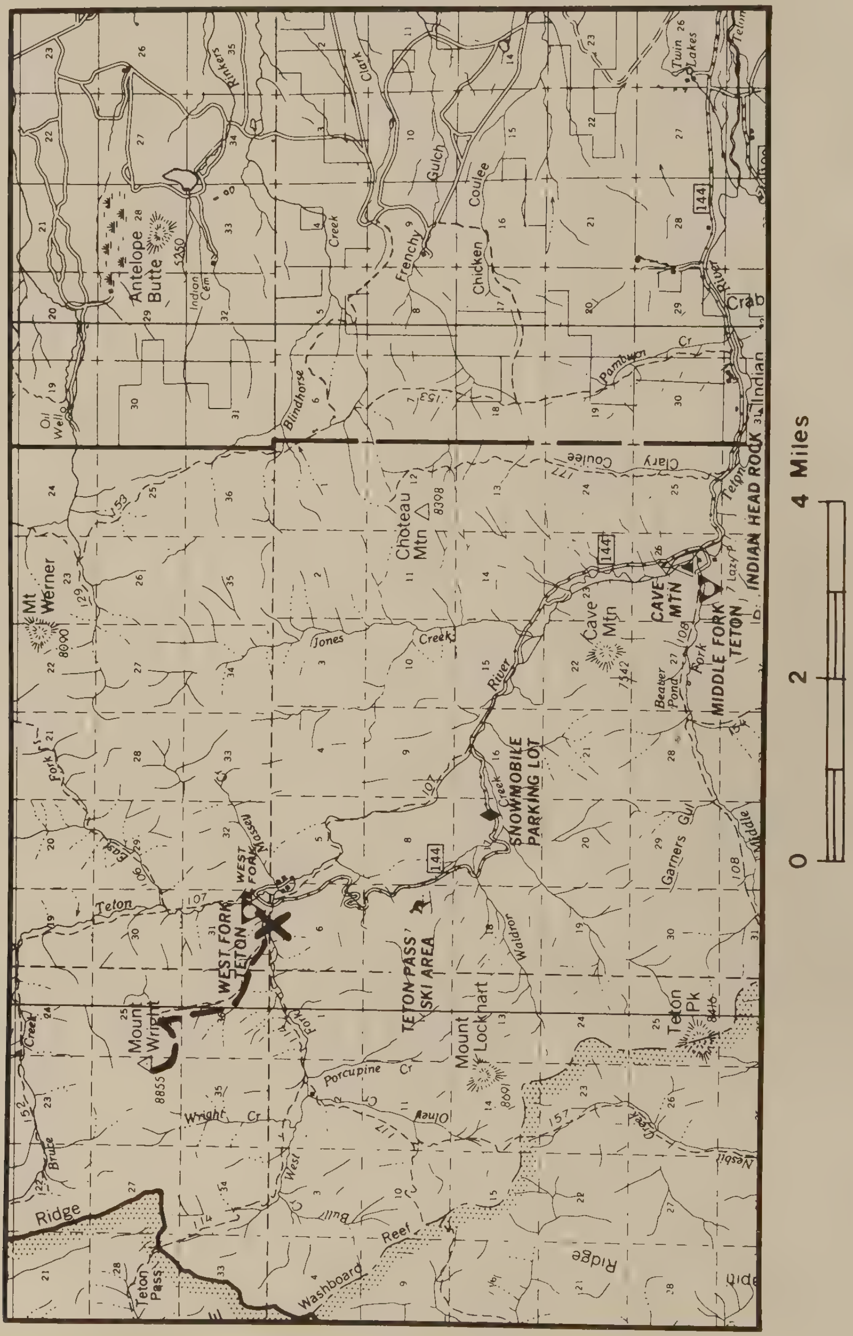
The hike: The old lookout is gone, but the trail to the 8,855-foot summit of Mount Wright remains. For those in average physical shape and with no mountaineering experience, this is the perfect hike to catch some views that stretch from Glacier National Park to the Scapegoat Wilderness.

Drive four miles north of Choteau and take the Teton River Road (Forest Road #144) west into the Rocky Mountain Front. After entering Forest Service land, the road passes Cave Mountain Campground, a very pretty car campground, on the left. Continue along the North Fork of the Teton River, past the Teton Pass Ski Area, and down to the West Fork Ranger Station. Just before the bridge crossing the Teton River, a small sign will point to the Mount Wright trailhead on the left.

The trail starts in an old clearcut and begins to climb to the north on a closed-off logging road. The route is well-marked, since a Youth Conservation Corps group signed the trail years ago. After half a mile, the trail leaves the clearcut and enters the forest.

Switchbacking up the southeastern slope of the mountain, you may catch

HIKE 73 *MOUNT WRIGHT*



Antelope Butte
5250
Indian Cem
Oil Well
Rinkers
Clark
Creek
French
Gulch
Chicken
Coulee
Twin Lakes
144
River
Crab
Pambrun
Cr
Indian
Blindhorse
153
Clary Coulee
177
Choteau Mtn
8398
Mt Werner
8090
129
153
Jones
Creek
Cave Mtn
7342
CAVE MTN
108
Fork
Beaver Pond
MIDDLE FORK TETON
INDIAN HEAD ROCK
Teton
7 Lazy P
River
107
SNOWMOBILE PARKING LOT
Creek
Massey
WEST FORK
WEST FORK TETON
Teton
Fork
East
106
Garners
Gul
Middle
108
TETON PASS SKI AREA
Waldron
Mount Lockhart
8691
Teton Pk
8416
Mount Wright
8855
Creek
Wright
Cr
Porcupine
Cr
Olney
117
157
Nesbit
Creek
152
Bruce
West
Bull
Reef
Ridge
Washboard
Ridge
Teton Pass
0
2
4 Miles

Mountain goat, a favorite of wilderness visitors. Harry Engels photo.

glimpses of mountain goats on Mount Wright's south ridge as the trail breaks out of the sparse tree cover. Two miles from the trailhead, you'll reach a small pass to the east of the main summit.

Above timberline now, the trail is very faint in these meadows. The actual trail cuts across a steep bushy slope to the west. It isn't hard to find. More adventuresome hikers might want to follow the old telegraph poles to the plateau above.

Whichever route you choose to reach the plateau, it would be wise to avoid going up there in a storm, since the barren, windswept reaches are totally exposed. The trail continues over the plateau to a low saddle on the north-south ridge ahead. Once on the ridge, it's a short hike to the summit.

The views on the summit are some of the best to be found anywhere in the northern Rockies. Directly north is the knife-edged top of Mount Patrick Gass, named after a lieutenant in the Lewis and Clark expedition. To the east is the thin, steep ridge of Choteau Mountain and the endless expanse of the northern Great Plains. With a good regional map (the Lewis and Clark National Forest Map is useful), you can pick out Mount Saint Nicholas in Glacier Park, the long limestone cliffs of the north Chinese Wall, and the large hulks of Old Baldy and Rocky Mountain Peak to the south. Literally hundreds of other peaks stretch across the horizon on a cloudless day.

The descent from the summit should take you less than two hours, while the ascent can stretch as long as four or five hours. The 3,500-foot elevation gain may deter families with young children, but the trail doesn't require any mountain-climbing experience—just strong lungs and legs.

The route is totally waterless, so fill up before you start. Try this one early in the season (June or early July) so that a few snowfields are still around to slake your thirst near the summit. The exposed, south-facing slopes can make for a real scorcher of a trip in August.—*Ed Madej and Rosemary Rowe*

HIKE 74 *DEEP CREEK, NORTH FORK OF THE SUN RIVER*

General description: A 3- or 4-day hike through some little-visited country in the Rocky Mountain Front area.
General location: 20 miles west of Augusta.
Maps: Patricks Basin, Arsenic Peak, Our Lake, Gates Park, and Glenn Creek USGS Quads; and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Visitors Map (Rocky Mountain Division).
Special attractions: A variety of jagged limestone peaks and large lowland meadows.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 3,600 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,600 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, or call (406) 466-5341.

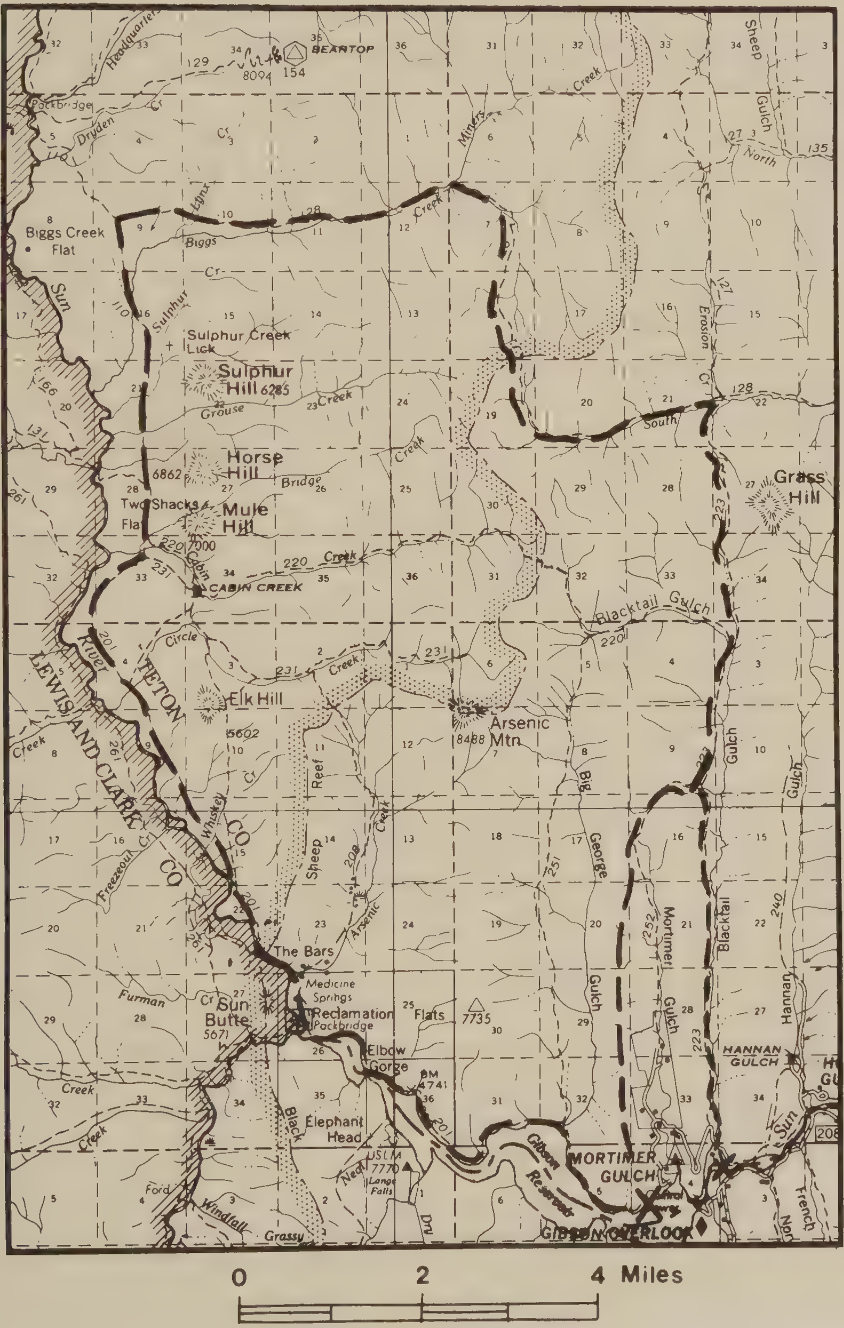
The hike: This outstanding thirty-five-mile loop hike passes through some of the most spectacular country to be found along the Rocky Mountain Front and in the eastern portions of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The trip can be made in three days, but for the sake of your feet take at least four.

Trail #223, a National Recreation Trail, starts at the head of Blacktail Gulch below Gibson Reservoir. Take County Road #208 northwest from Augusta, turning right to Blacktail Gulch one mile before Gibson Dam.

You might want to take two vehicles and leave one at the Mortimer Gulch Campground, on the north side of Gibson Reservoir. This will save a couple miles of hiking along the road back to Blacktail Gulch at the end of the trip.

There is a trail (#252) beginning at the Mortimer Gulch Campground that

HIKE 74 *DEEP CREEK, NORTH FORK OF THE SUN RIVER*


BEARTOP
8094
154
Headquarters
Packbridge
Dryden
Cr
Miners
Creek
Sheep
Gulch
North
135
Lynx
128
Biggs Creek
Flat
Biggs
Cr
Sun
Sulphur
Sulphur Creek
Lick
Sulphur
Hill 6285
Grouse
Creek
Erosion
Cr
127
128
South
Horse
Hill
6862
Bridge
Creek
Two Shacks
Flat
Mule
Hill
7000
220
Cabin
231
CABIN CREEK
220
Creek
Grass
Hill
223
Blacktail Gulch
220
Circle
231
Creek
231
River
201
TETON
LEWIS AND CLARK
CO
CO
Elk Hill
5602
Cr
Reef
Arsenic
Mtn
8488
Big
George
Gulch
Gulch
Creek
Whiskey
Freezeout
Cr
Sheep
208
Creek
Arsenic
251
252
Mortimer
Gulch
Blacktail
240
Hannan
The Bars
Medicine
Springs
Reclamation
Packbridge
Flats
7735
Furman
Cr
Sun
Butte
5671
Elbow
Gorge
BM
4741
Creek
Creek
Black
Elephant
Head
USLM
7770
Lange
Falls
Neal
Dry
Gibson
Reservoir
MORTIMER
GULCH
GIBSON OVERLOOK
HANNAN
GULCH
Sun
208
French
Ford
Windfall
Grassy
0
2
4 Miles

parallels and then intersects Trail #223. However, it passes near a recently expanded subdivision and through a horse allotment. Trail #223 is much more pleasant and scenic.

Heading north on Trail #223, you'll enter the Deep Creek Further Planning Area in the Lewis and Clark National Forest. There you'll be rewarded by incredible views of the Rocky Mountain Front to the south. Ignore the trail that breaks off to the left at the four-mile mark (the trail isn't marked on the map). Continue north on Trail #223, which leads into the south fork of Deep Creek.

After crossing Deep Creek at the site of an outfitter's camp, follow the stream bank eastward until a well-defined trail (#128) becomes apparent. This is a remnant of an old seismic road bulldozed up the drainage in the late 1950s. Follow this track to Biggs Creek Pass and the official entrance into the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

A scramble up the goat trails on the hillside to the west of the pass provides outstanding views of the North Fork of the Sun River Valley and tantalizing views of the Chinese Wall in the distance.

The trail now drops down into the Biggs Creek drainage and skirts the southern slopes of Rocky Mountain Peak, at 9,392 feet the highest peak in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Six miles and one stream crossing later, the trail pops out of the timber into a large meadow called Biggs Creek Flat. Turn south on Trail #110 (which eventually becomes Trail #201). Sixteen footsore miles later, you'll reach Mortimer Gulch and your waiting car.

This loop has many attributes that commend it as one of the state's premiere hikes. The valley of the North Fork of the Sun River, for example, is one of the largest lowland valleys outside of Alaska that is preserved in a completely wild condition. The trail wanders through huge lowland meadows that offer a chance to see elk, deer, and an occasional grizzly, along with awesome views of the surrounding mountains.

As you might expect, with all this to offer, the North Fork portion of this hike will be heavily used during the peak summer season, although the Deep Creek stretch receives very light use. To avoid the crowds, go before the Fourth of July, but be prepared for a short bit of snow on Biggs Creek Pass as well as a few mosquitoes. Or go before hunting season (September 1-15). Summer crowds will be gone, and the fall hordes won't have descended yet.

There are numerous fine places to camp along this loop. The South Fork of Deep Creek has two sites used by outfitters during the fall hunting season and a scattering of level sites near the stream. On the Biggs Creek-Sun River stretch, campsites are essentially unlimited, with open, aspen-ringed meadows being especially attractive.

Numerous loop opportunities abound within this larger loop. One of the most scenic, offering glimpses of high alpine country, is Cabin Creek Trail #220, which heads west (left) five miles up Blacktail Gulch and connects with Trail #201.

Trails #223, #220 and #251 have all been recently reconstructed by the Forest Service.

The Biggs Creek Flat area suffered some minor damage from the Canyon Creek fire in 1988, but the rest of the area along this hike was untouched.—*Ed Madej and Rosemary Rowe*

HIKE 75 *DEVILS GLEN*

General description: A short and easy day hike along a wild river.
General location: 15 miles southwest of Augusta.
Maps: Steamboat Mountain USGS Quads, and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Map (Rocky Mountain Division).
Special attractions: Waterfalls and good fishing along a beautiful river.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 640 feet.
Elevation loss: 200 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, or call (406) 466-5341.

The hike: Floating the lower Dearborn River has become very popular, but fewer people bother to hike the river's upper reaches through Devils Glen. This is the perfect family hike, with low mileage, virtually no elevation gain, and a fish-filled river.

Take the Elk Creek Road southwest from Augusta to Bean Lake, or take County Road #434 north from Montana Highway 200, which branches off twenty-seven miles southwest of Simms. At Bean Lake, take the Dearborn River Road #577 westward into the mountains.

The trailhead is two miles from the Diamond X Ranch and on BLM property. The Forest Service has recently obtained legal access to establish a new trail at this location. At the request of the private landowners, the Forest Service is advising hikers to stay on the trail until the National Forest boundary, which is well-marked.

Three-quarters of a mile from the trailhead, the trail (#206) crosses the Dearborn River over a newly constructed bridge. After about three miles, the trail begins to climb into a rock pile coming off the southern slopes of Steamboat Mountain. This is called Devils Glen.

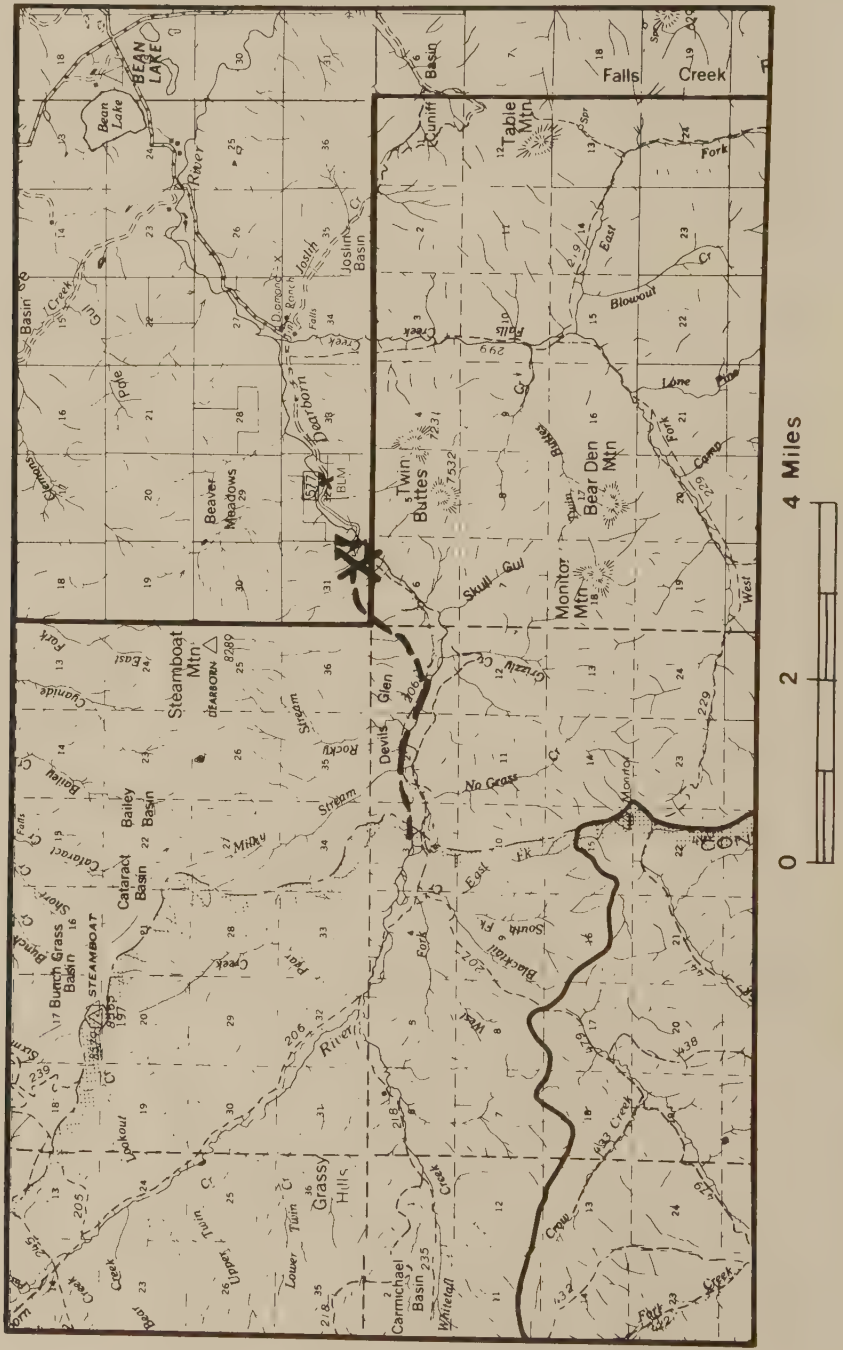
Much of the trail has recently been rerouted and reconstructed, from the river crossing through Devils Glen. The entire trail stays on the north side of the Dearborn River.

You can camp anywhere along the river at this point, but on busier weekends you might want to ford the stream and camp on the southern side in the trees, or continue past Devils Glen for a mile or two more. The fishing is equally good above the glen, but the valley is more heavily wooded and slightly less scenic.

If you're bored with fishing and appreciating the rushing river, you can hike north up the rocky slopes to the summit of Steamboat Mountain, which offers stunning views of the Rocky Mountain Front and the Great Plains.

This entire area is a recommended addition to the Scapegoat Wilderness. If enough people visit the area and talk to their congressman about it, it might become part of the Scapegoat someday.—*Ed Madej and Rosemary Rowe*

HIKE 75 *DEVILS GLEN*



Bean Lake
BEAN LAKE
River
Joslin Basin
Diamond X Ranch
Dearborn
577
BLM
Beaver Meadows
Table Mtn
Falls Creek
Cuniff Basin
East Fork
Blowout Cr
Lone Pine
Twin Buttes
7231
7532
Bear Den Mtn
Monitor Mtn
Skull Gul
Camp
West
Steamboat Mtn
DEARBORN
8289
Devils Glen
206
Grizzly Cr
No Grass Cr
Rocky Stream
Milky Stream
Bailey Basin
Cataract Basin
Bunch Grass Basin
STEAMBOAT
Blacktail
South Fk
East Fk
River
Grassy Hills
Upper Twin Cr
Lower Twin Cr
Carmichael Basin
Whitetail Creek
Crow Creek
Lookout
Monitor
CON
0
2
4 Miles

HIKE 76 *HALFMOON PARK*

General description: A 3-day hike for experienced hikers.
General location: 16 miles southwest of Augusta in the Scapegoat Wilderness.
Maps: Scapegoat Mountain, Steamboat Mountain, and Jakie Creek USGS Quads, the Scapegoat Wilderness Map, and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Map (Rocky Mountain Division).
Special attractions: Good views of Scapegoat Mountain, perhaps the highlight of the Scapegoat Wilderness.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,745 feet.
Elevation loss: 1,264 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, or call (406) 466-5341.

The entire area traversed by this hike was totally devastated by the 247,000-acre Canyon Creek Fire in 1988. Trails were reopened shortly after the fire, but of course flora and fauna suffered significant impacts. Nonetheless, the hike provides an excellent opportunity to observe nature healing its wounds.

This rugged, three-day hike takes you to the heart of the Scapegoat Wilderness. If you budget an extra day, you'll have time to climb the unusual lump of limestone called Scapegoat Mountain. Halfmoon Creek runs right by this glaciated mountain, which at 9,204 feet is the second highest peak in the Scapegoat Wilderness. It's a thirteen-mile, one-way hike into Halfmoon Park, not including the extra mileage needed to climb Scapegoat Mountain.

Find the trailhead by taking Forest Service Road #196 southwest from Augusta until the road dead-ends on Elk Creek near Cataract Falls. Take Trail #215 over Elk Pass and down Smith Creek to Jakie Creek. Turn left onto Jakie Creek Trail #214, which goes to Welcome Pass.

After crossing Welcome Pass, turn up Dearborn River Trail #206 for about four miles until you reach Trail #216, which leads to Halfmoon Park.

You can either retrace your steps back to the Dearborn River via Telephone Creek or make a small loop and see new country. To do the latter, go south from Halfmoon Park on Trail #216 until you reach the Dearborn River. The trail turns east there and leads back to the Telephone Creek junction.

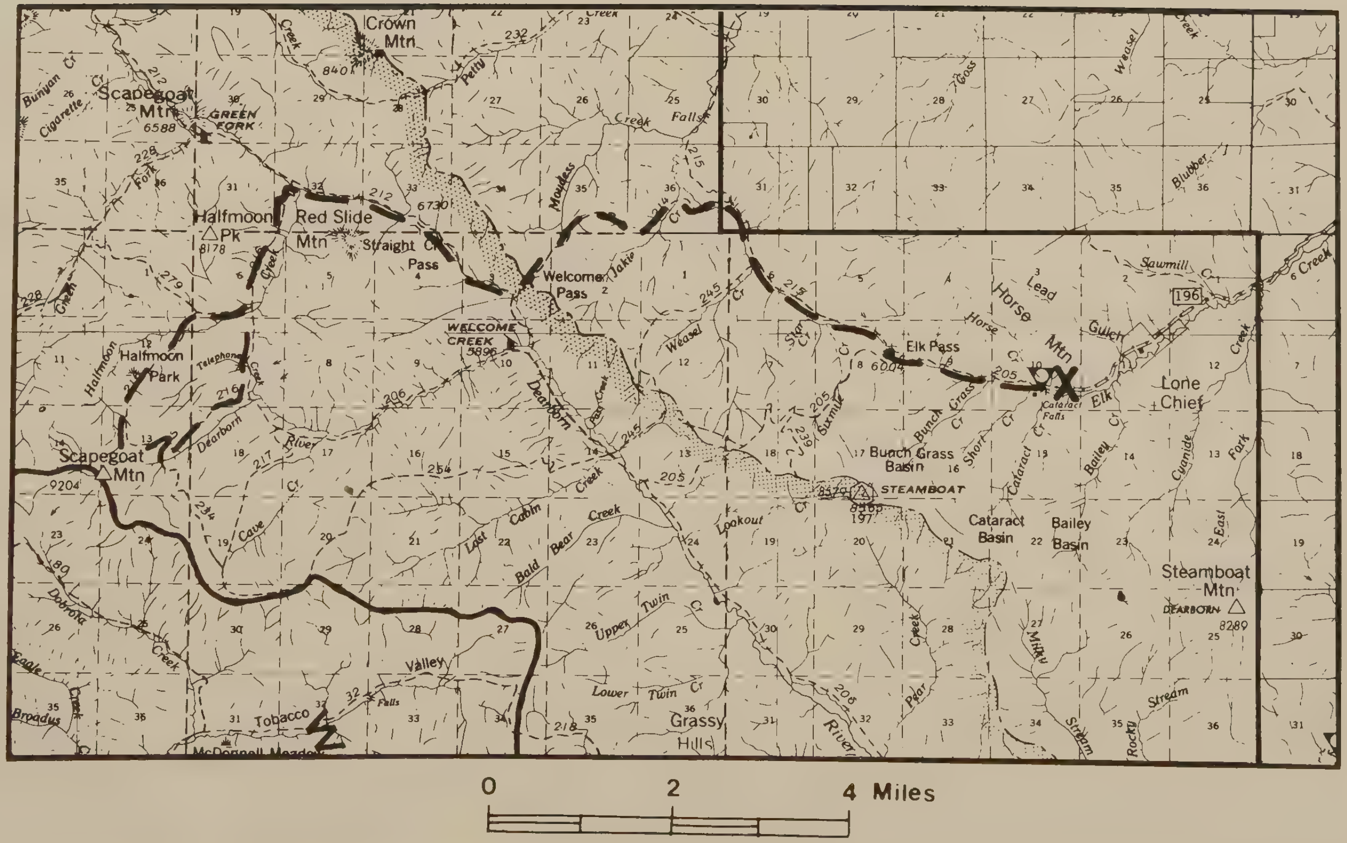
The hike has well-maintained trails with plenty of water except for a three-mile stretch from Smith Creek over Welcome Pass down to the Dearborn River. Since this hike extends into the Scapegoat Wilderness, no motorized vehicles are allowed. Take this hike anytime between late July and late September.

This hike isn't for fanatic fishermen. There are fish in the upper stretches of the Dearborn River, southeast of Welcome Creek Ranger Station, but they're small and scarce.

Black and grizzly bears frequented this area before the 1988 fire. So it's probably still a good idea to keep a clean camp to reduce the chances of a confrontation.

You can establish campsites at several places along this hike. Perhaps the best spots are Welcome Creek (halfway point), Halfmoon Creek, and Green

HIKE 76 *HALFMOON PARK*


Crown Mtn
8401
Scapegoat Mtn
6588
GREEN FORK
Halfmoon Pk
8178
Red Slide Mtn
Straight Cr Pass
6730
Welcome Pass
WELCOME CREEK
5896
Halfmoon Park
Scapegoat Mtn
9204
Dearborn
River
Elk Pass
6004
Horse Mtn
Lead
Lone Chief
Cataract Falls
196
Bunch Grass Basin
STEAMBOAT
8579
Cataract Basin
Bailey Basin
Steamboat Mtn
DEARBORN
8289
Lookout
Grassy Hills
Tobacco
Valley
Falls
0
2
4 Miles

Fork Creek. The firewood situation is likely to have changed since the fire. So you may want to bring along a backpack stove just to be safe.

Many hikers who go to Halfmoon Park allow an extra day to climb mighty Scapegoat Mountain. There is a trail from Halfmoon Creek over the ridge to Green Fork Creek. Then go southwest up Green Fork Creek to the end of the glaciated valley. From here, find a goat trail that takes you out of this cirque onto the ridge. Walk east along this ridge to the summit. The view from the top is impressive.—*Dave Orndoff and Ed Madej*

HIKE 77 *ALPINE PARK*

General description: A steep but short 6-mile hike to a high subalpine meadow in a little-used part of the Scapegoat Wilderness.
General location: 10 miles northwest of Lincoln.
Maps: Arrastra Mountain and Coopers Lake USGS Quads, the Scapegoat Wilderness Map, and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: The large, subalpine valley of Meadow Creek.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,300 feet.
Elevation loss: 854 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Lincoln Ranger District, Helena National Forest, Box 219, Lincoln, MT 59639, or call (406) 362-4265.

The hike: This trip will take you into the far southern portion of the Scapegoat Wilderness, up to a pretty subalpine valley off the main travel routes in this popular wild area. Although the trailhead is in the Lolo National Forest, the major portion of the trip lies within the Lincoln Ranger District of the Helena National Forest.

Turn north from Montana Highway 200 sixteen miles west of Lincoln (two miles west of the intersection with Montana Highway 141) onto the Rock Creek Road, which leads to the Whitetail Ranch and Coopers Lake. After seven miles of driving across the level expanse of Kleinschmidt Flat, turn right toward Forest Road #4106 and the Dry Creek trailhead, which appears in another two miles.

The trail (labeled the Meadow Creek Trail on the topo maps) switchbacks steeply from the valley floor, climbing some 2,300 feet to the 6,800-foot pass into the Meadow Creek drainage. In three miles, the route passes several small ponds, the only water sources in the appropriately named Dry Creek watershed.

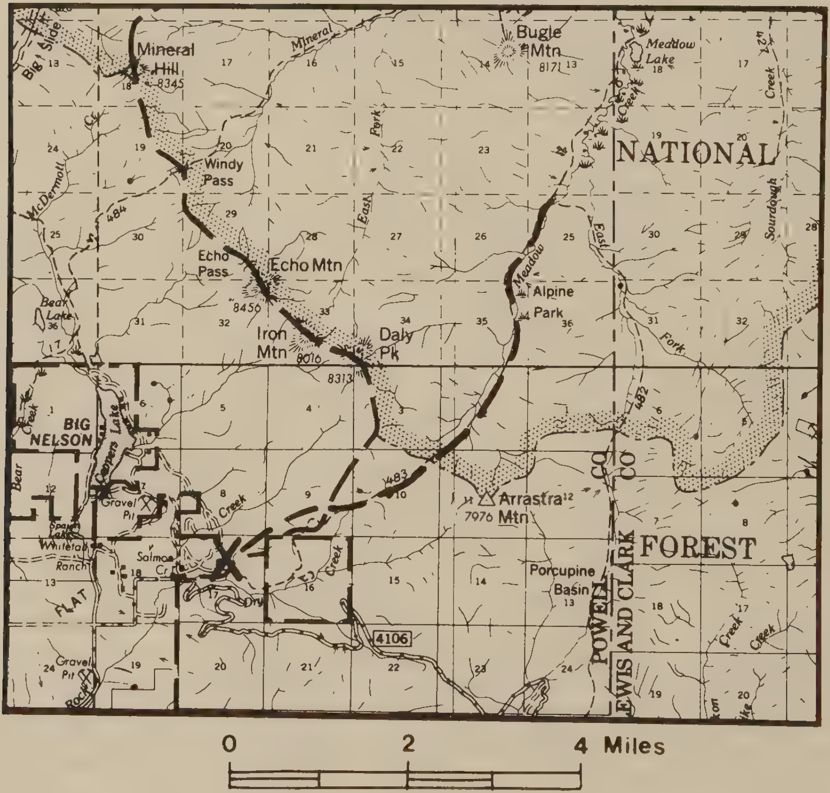
As the trail reaches the higher slopes, views open up to the southwest, overlooking the broad valley of Kleinschmidt Flat. Kleinschmidt is a glacially bulldozed plain, formed by large glaciers that ground their way out of the Scapegoat Mountains into the Blackfoot Valley during the last ice age. The scapegoat Mountains today are too low to support permanent snowfields, but they still bear the signs of past glacial advances.

Dropping down from the broad pass that lies on the southern boundary of the Scapegoat Wilderness, the trail enters Alpine Park along Meadow Creek. Here, some six miles from the road, are several good camping sites in the scattered meadows along the stream. The mixture of forest and meadow continues for two miles down to where Meadow Creek leaves Alpine Park and joins the East Fork of Meadow Creek.

Alpine Park can serve as a fine base camp for further explorations of the surrounding meadows, for fishing in Meadow Creek and Meadow Lake (farther downstream), or for the steep, four-mile round-trip up the old trail to the summit of Arrastra Mountain. Arrastra Mountain provides some interesting views of the remote peaks to the north deeper in the Scapegoat Wilderness.

Alpine Park is grizzly country, although problems between hikers and bears are few. Make sure to keep a clean camp and follow the usual safety precautions.—*Karen Renne*

HIKE 77 *ALPINE PARK*


Big Slide
Mineral Hill
8345
Mineral
Bugle Mtn
8171
Meadow Lake
Creek
NATIONAL
Windy Pass
McDermott
484
East Fork
Sourdough
Echo Pass
Echo Mtn
8456
Meadow
Alpine Park
Bear Lake
Iron Mtn
8016
Daly Pk
8313
Fork
BIG NELSON
Copper Lake
Bear
482
483
Gravel Pit
Creek
Arrastra Mtn
7976
Spawn Lake
Whitetail Ranch
Salmon Cr
FOREST
Porcupine Basin
POWELL CO
LEWIS AND CLARK CO
FLAT
Dry
4106
Gravel Pit
Rock
Creek
0
2
4 Miles

Gates of the Mountains Wilderness

Overview

The Gates of the Mountains is one of the most rugged places east of the Continental Divide. The limestone cliffs, yellow grass, and ponderosa pine cover these canyons and peaks. The area is home to elk, deer, and bighorn sheep. Also, mountain goats now inhabit the cliffs.

A boat ride is all it takes to visit just the Gates of the Mountains Canyon. When the Missouri was dammed, the water backed up to create Holter "Lake." Boat tours leave from the old Hilger Ranch boat dock and offer a scenic ride along the river through the center of the wilderness.

Much of the Gates of the Mountains notoriety resulted from the tragic fire of 1949 in Mann Gulch and the ensuing book by Norman Maclean, *Young Men and Fire*. His book has helped bring more and more visitors to the area, but most still stay on the tour boat. You are invited to experience the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness at the most basic level. Hike it.

HIKE 78

GATES OF THE MOUNTAINS

General description: An overnighter through one of Montana's smaller wilderness areas.
General location: 20 miles northeast of Helena.
Maps: Upper Holter Lake, Candle Mountain, and Hogback USGS Quads; and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Several historic points from the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,550 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,572 feet.
Season: May through October.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 449-5490.

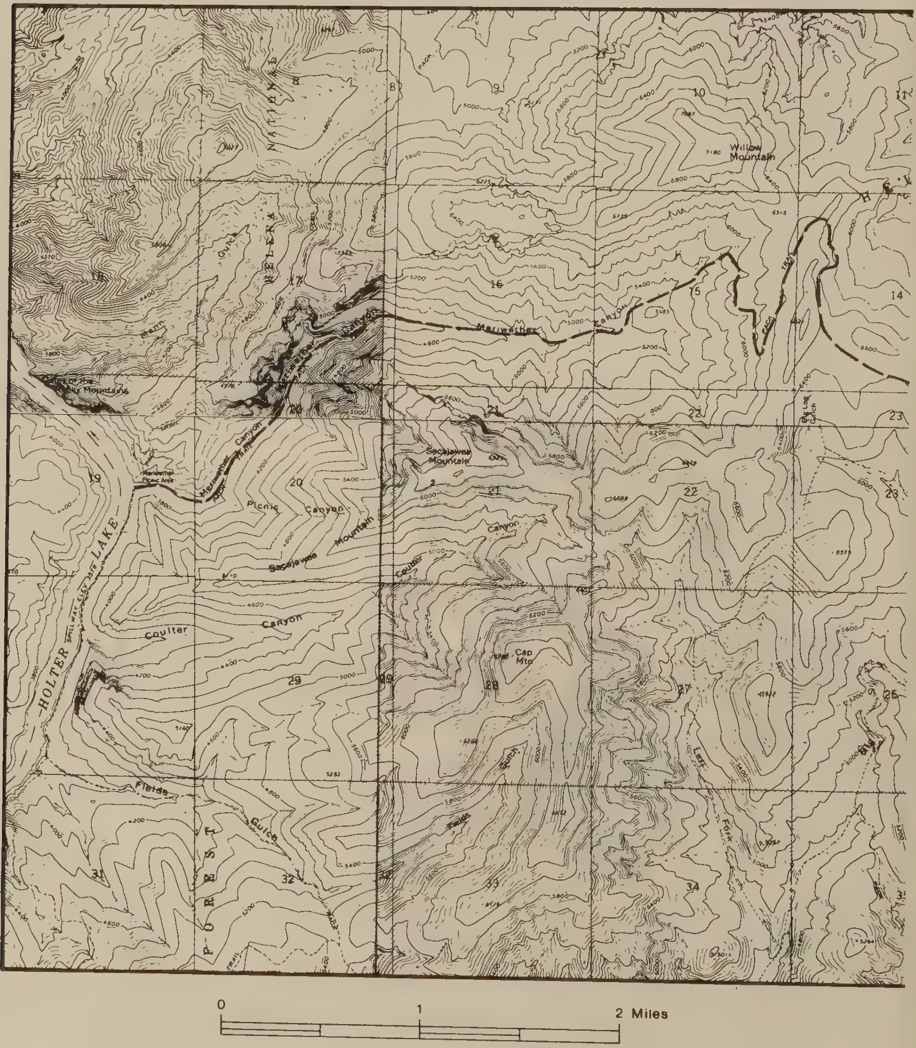
The hike: The 28,560-acre Gates of the Mountains Wilderness has the variety representative of most wildlands—open parks, deep canyons, craggy peaks. The one exception is that it has no lakes. More than compensating for this void, however, is the area's rich history.

The trail starts at Refrigerator Canyon. To get there, drive northeast from Helena on County Highway 280 for about fifteen miles until you cross the Missouri River via the York Bridge. Then drive for about four miles to the tiny community of York.

Turn north (left) here, and follow the well-maintained gravel road until it intersects with another gravel road at the small town of Nelson. Turn east (right) and drive about five miles until you see a well-marked trailhead for Refrigerator Canyon. The last five miles on the Beaver Creek Road can be dangerous because of sharp, blind corners and logging trucks. So if you're driving, don't be caught gawking at the scenery. Let the passengers take in the steep-walled Beaver Creek Canyon with its whitish, limestone cliffs and beautiful stream.

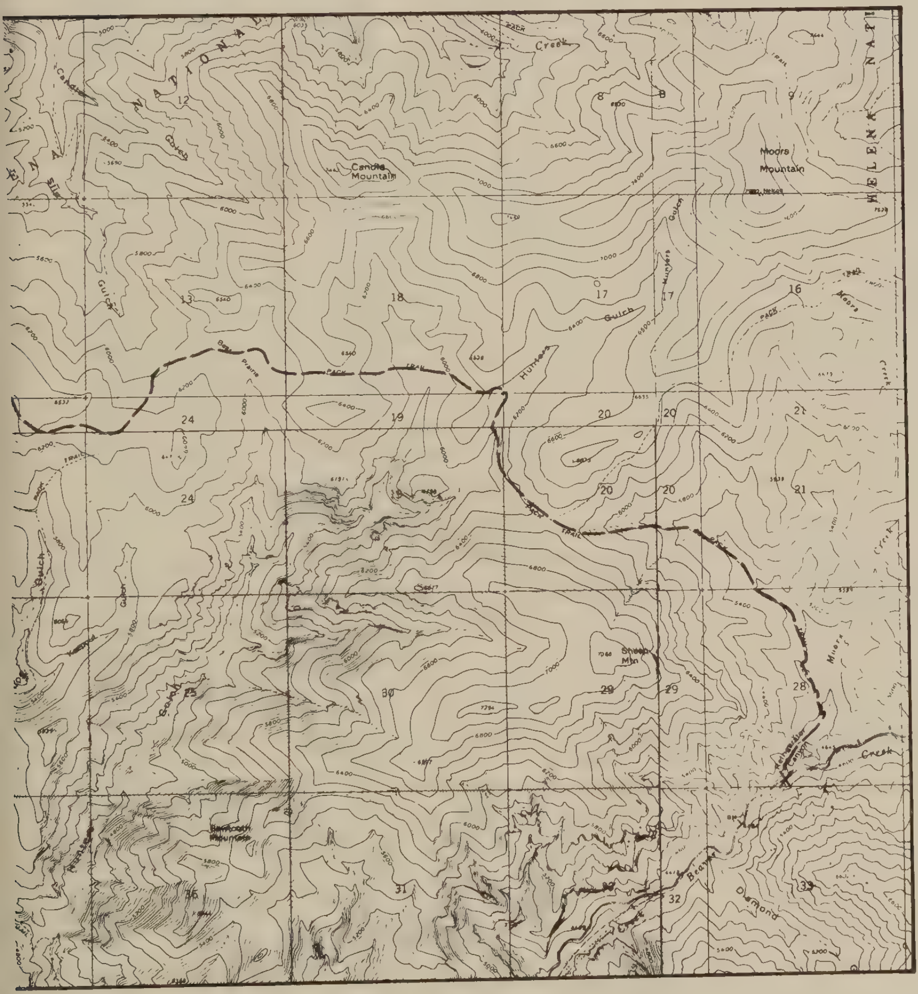
This hike is logistically more difficult than most. It's an eighteen-mile point-to-point hike that ends at Meriwether Picnic Ground on the Missouri River.

HIKE 78 *GATES OF THE MOUNTAINS*


Willow Mountain
Meriwether Canyon
HELENA NATIONAL FOREST
Gates of the Mountains
Meriwether Picnic Area
Sacajawea Mountain
Picnic Canyon
Coulter Canyon
Cap Mtn
HOLTER LAKE
Fields Gulch
Left Fork
Big Log Gulch
0
1
2 Miles

Leave a vehicle or have somebody pick you up at Gates of the Mountains Boat Club.

Gates of the Mountains, Inc. (458-5241) offers boat tours of the scenic "Gates of the Mountains" section of the Missouri several times daily; these tours stop at Meriwether Picnic Ground on the way up and back. When you reach the picnic ground, you'll have to wait for the next boat. However, check the schedule before you leave so that you don't miss the last one. Also, bring a few dollars to pay for the ride.


Candle Mountain
Moors Mountain
HELENA NATI
NATIONAL
Gulch
Hunters Gulch
Hunters
Creek
Moors Creek
Sheep Mtn
Meriwether Canyon
Beaver
Diamond
Sawtooth Mountain
PACK TRAIL
12
18
17
16
24
19
20
21
30
29
28
31
32
33

Hikers looking into the Missouri River Canyon from the Gates of the Mountains Wilderrness. Forest Service photo.

To get to the Gates of the Mountains boat dock, take Interstate 15 north from Helena for about sixteen miles and turn right at the Gates of the Mountains exit. Follow the paved road two miles to the boat dock.

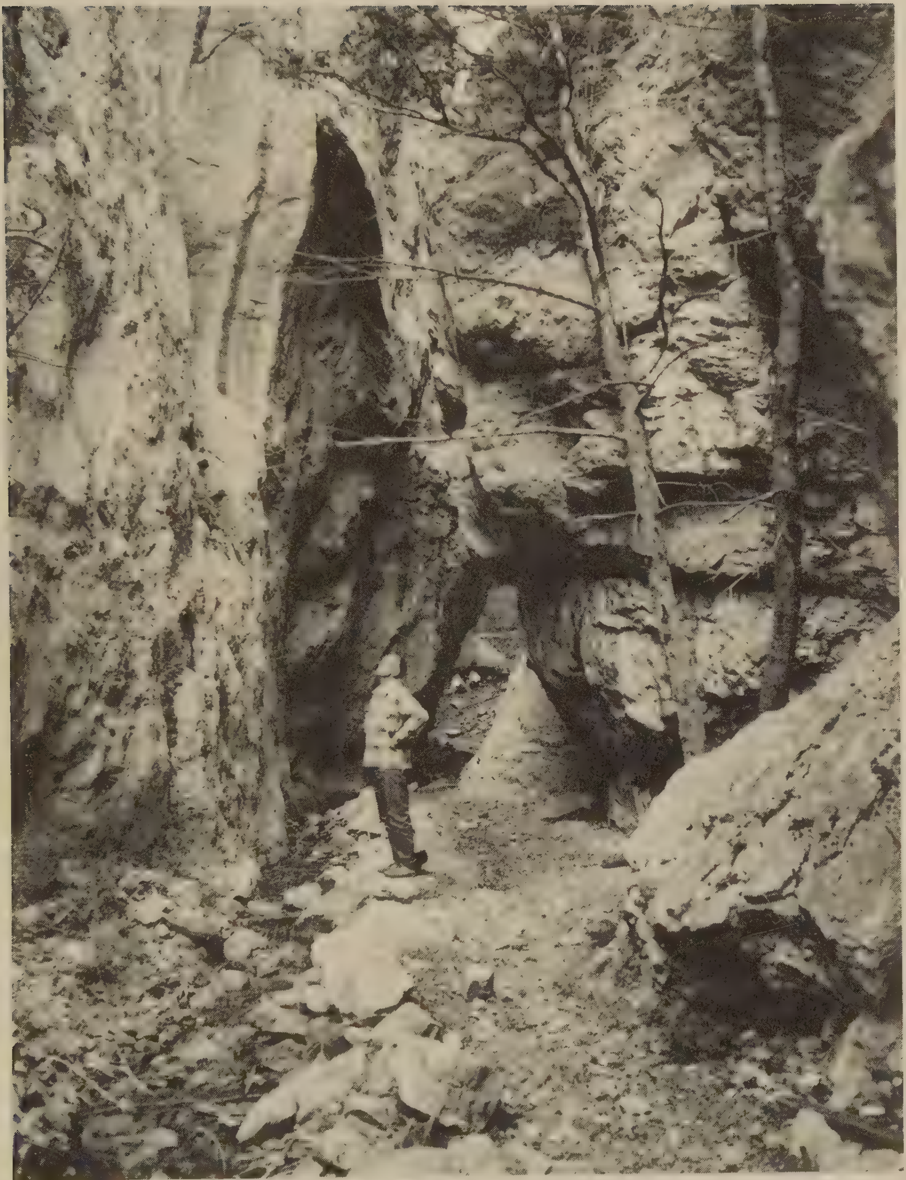
This trail can, of course, be taken in reverse, but most hikers find the boat ride a refreshing conclusion.

From the trailhead, Trail #259 gradually climbs about a quarter-mile to Refrigerator Canyon. Even on the hottest summer day, it's cool in this extremely steep, narrow canyon.

After Refrigerator Canyon, the trail gradually switchbacks about three miles to the Willow Creek Trail junction. Trail #260 continues on to the right toward Porcupine Creek. Continue left on Trail #259, which leads to Bear Prairie.

About five miles later, you reach the wildflower-carpeted Bear Prairie, one of the largest and most gorgeous mountain meadows in the Helena area. You can camp here or hike another mile to Kennedy Springs, which sits in a similar but slightly less impressive meadow. Water is scarce but can be found at Bear Prairie and usually at Kennedy Springs.

From the Willow Creek Trail junction through Kennedy Springs (about seven miles), the trail is fairly level and well-maintained. The only confusing spot



Refrigerator Canyon, on the edge of the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness, is usually 12-20 degrees cooler than the surrounding country. Forest Service photo.

occurs just after Kennedy Springs in a large meadow where the trail swings to the right to the top of a ridge and then starts its descent to Meriwether Picnic Ground, where the Lewis and Clark Expedition camped almost two centuries ago. The last five miles switchback steeply downhill—another good reason why hikers rarely take this trip in reverse.

After June, this trail is devoid of water with the exception of a short section of Meriwether Creek at the head of the canyon. On the plus side, the dry climate holds down the mosquitoes. This area has an advantage over many other wildlands in that snow usually melts early in the year, even as early as late April in dry years.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 79 *MANN GULCH*

Overview

Interest in this area has grown since the latest release of Norman Maclean's *Young Men and Fire* in 1992. In his book, Maclean pieced together a complete picture of actual events and explains the controversy surrounding the Mann Gulch Fire. This book is considered to be the most accurate account of what happened at Mann Gulch. Thirteen men died in a wildfire there in 1949. Also Paramount Pictures bought the movie rights to *Young Men and Fire*, and a film is pending.

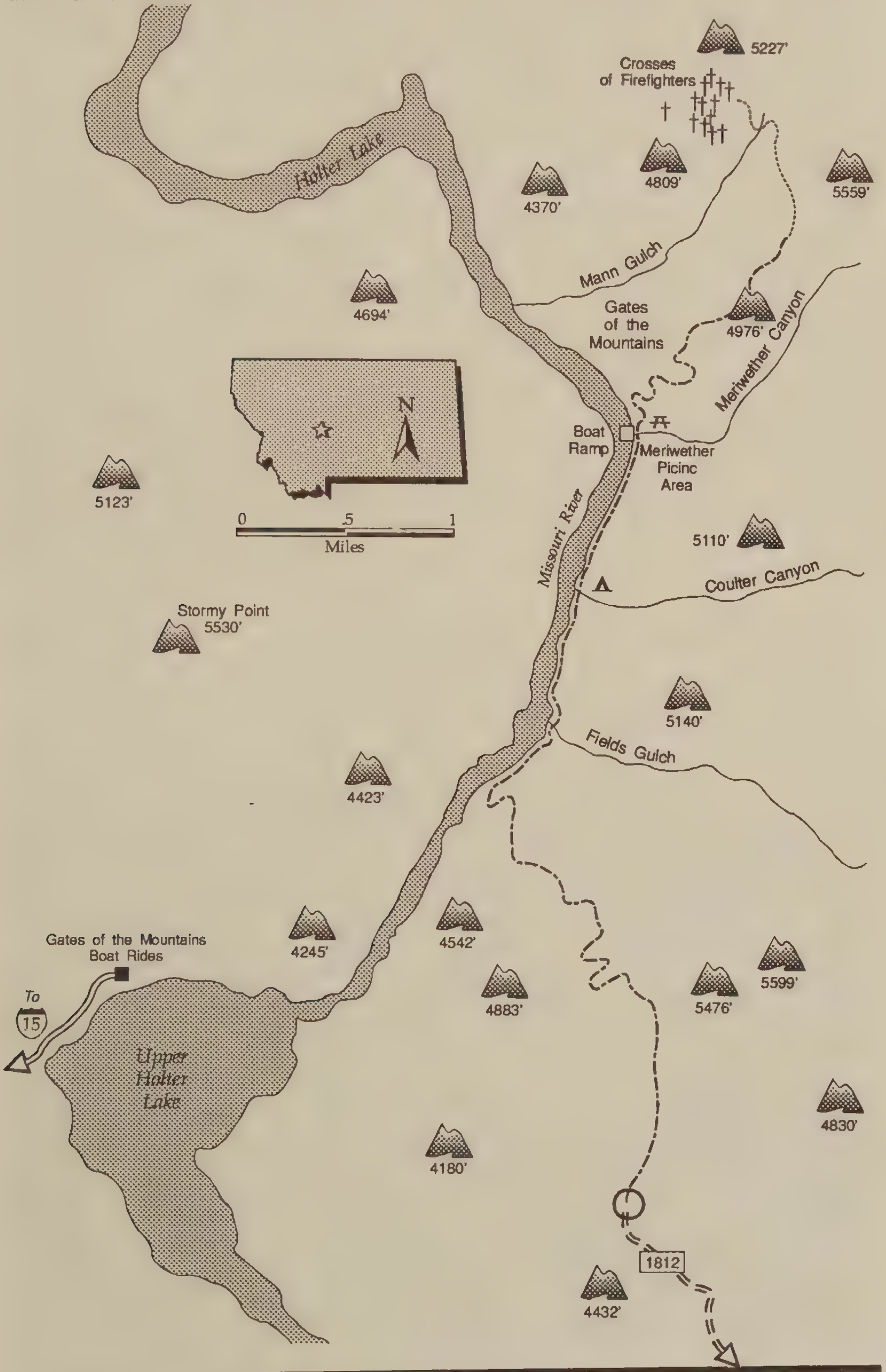
This hike is gorgeous even without reading the book. But after reading *Young Men and Fire*, it can be spiritual.

The fire was located in the "Gates of the Mountains" wild area just east of the Missouri River, some twenty miles north of Helena, near the top of the ridge between Meriwether and Mann gulches. The general area is steep and jagged on the Meriwether side and is said to be one of the roughest areas east of the Continental Divide.

According to the government *Report of Board of Review* and accounts in Maclean's book, on August 5, 1949, a fire started by lightning developed in

View of ridge where fire occured in Mann Gulch. Russ Schneider photo.

HIKE 79 *MANN GULCH*


5227'
Crosses of Firefighters
Holter Lake
4370'
4809'
5559'
Mann Gulch
4694'
Gates of the Mountains
4976'
Meriwether Canyon
N
Boat Ramp
Meriwether Picinc Area
5123'
0
.5
1
Miles
Missouri River
5110'
Coulter Canyon
Stormy Point 5530'
5140'
Fields Gulch
4423'
Gates of the Mountains Boat Rides
4245'
4542'
To
15
4883'
5476'
5599'
Upper Holter Lake
4830'
4180'
1812
4432'

Mann Gulch. Sixteen smokejumpers were flown from Missoula, and fifteen were dropped by their C-47 cargo plane at the northeast end of Mann Gulch. At 3:10 p.m., the fire had grown to sixty acres. The fifteen smokejumpers on the ground gathered the air-dropped cargo and ate, confident of their success. Their foreman, Wagner Dodge, went to meet the Meriwether Canyon recreation and fire prevention guard, Jim Harrison.

Around 5 p.m., the crew started up the south side of the gulch toward the fire, while Harrison and Dodge met ahead of them. Shortly after, the crew began climbing south toward the fire. Dodge ordered them to stop. Upon reaching them, Dodge ordered Bill Hellman, his second-in-command, to take the crew to the north side of the gulch and "follow contour" toward the river.

At about 5:40 p.m., Dodge gathered his crew, placing Hellman at the rear to keep the line intact while Dodge took the lead toward the river. They continued down the gulch for five minutes before Dodge saw that the fire had crossed the gulch and was coming up the ridge toward them. They were less than two hundred yards from the fire at 5:45 p.m. They then turned back up the gulch, and the race began for the ridge.

At 5:53 p.m., Dodge ordered the men to drop their pulaskis and saws, which some had already done. The fire roared closer. Then Dodge stopped and did the most critical thing to survive. He lit the dry grass beneath him on fire and yelled desperately for the rest of his crew to enter the burnt area with him. But none listened. Sallee and Rumsey, the lone survivors from the crew recalled somebody said, "To hell with that, I'm getting out of here." If the crew had listened to Dodge, more might have survived. This was the first case in USDA Forest Service history that a man had set his own escape fire. Dodge laid in the coals with a wet cloth over his mouth, while the fire burned around him.

Memorial of fallen firefighters in Mann Gulch. Russ Schneider photo.

Sallee and Rumsey made it through an opening in the rock shelf parallel to the top of the ridge. That opening saved their lives. They stumbled over the other side of the ridge into the safety of a rockslide.

At approximately 5:56 p.m., eleven men died. That is the moment when the hands on Jim Harrison's watch melted. Most of the victims suffocated before the fire charred their bodies. Although Hellman and Joseph Sylvia survived the fire and were carried out through Rescue Gulch on the opposite side of the ridge, they died later in Helena. They were burnt beyond recovery.

Crosses marking where the men fell remind hikers of nature's power. These men died because of a "blow-up." The fire exploded in size from thirty acres to two thousand acres in just ten minutes. The air temperature was one hundred degrees, the grass had dried to the consistency of hay, and the young ponderosa and Douglas-fir were dried to the consistency of kindling. Lightning stuck and the whirling winds did the rest.

General description: A historic hike to the sight of the Mann Gulch Fire in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness.
General location: North of Helena by Holter Lake.
Maps: Upper Holter Lake and Beartooth Mountain and Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Mann Gulch, abundant wildlife, and the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,398 ft.
Elevation Loss: 1,502 ft.
Season: May through October
Information: District Ranger, Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar Street, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 449-5490. Gates of the Mountains Boat Tours. P.O. Box 478, Helena, MT 59624, or call (406) 458-5241.

The hike: To get to Mann Gulch, the easiest way is to drive twenty miles north of Helena on Interstate 15 and take the Gates of Mountains exit. Turn right and drive for two miles to Gates of Mountains Boat Dock (the old Hilger Ranch boat dock). Take the tour boat down river to Meriwether Picnic Area. The cost of a boat ride is $7.50 for adults $4.50 for children four to seventeen years old and free for those younger. The tours are renowned for wildlife viewing, including bald eagles, osprey, and mountain goats.

The tour drops you off at Meriwether Canyon. (From here see hike directions from Meriwether Canyon later in the hike description.) You can catch a boat back later. The boats usually run at two hour intervals. It is possible to just see Mann Gulch from the ridge and make the next boat. But unless you want to feel like a firefighter running from a fire, don't attempt to visit the crosses and return within two hours. A better approach is to take the early boat on Saturday at 10 a.m. and catch the last boat returning at 5 p.m. Be sure to arrive at the dock early and call ahead for current schedules and price changes.

An alternative to the boat ride is to hike in. Pack plenty of water and food for a long day hike to explore and discover the mystique of Mann Gulch.

To reach the trailhead, drive northeast of Helena on Montana Highway 280 for seventeen miles to York. Turn left at the York Bar and go eight miles west to Nelson, "The Cribbage Capital of the World." Turn left at Nelson and head

Hiker on slope where fire occured in Mann Gulch. Russ Schneider photo.

for the Missouri River. Drive four miles until it is possible to turn right on Forest Road 1812. Follow FR 1812 for another three miles to the trailhead. No facilities except parking are available. The last couple of miles are tough on your car but passible with a two-wheel-drive. Take Meriwether Trail 257 to Coulter Campground. It is five miles to Meriwether Picnic Area from the Spring Gulch trailhead. This part of the trail is seldom used. Several places where trees have fallen, the trail is hard to follow.

About 0.5 miles up, the trail disappears into a meadow. There are a couple cairns and a sign at the top end. Head for the saddle north and a little west. This meadow during spring is covered with wildflowers. The hardy grasses feed healthy herds of elk and deer. This area is just south of the Beartooth Game range.

At the top of the ridge, the trail descends in a series of switchbacks for the next two miles, a strenuous climb coming out. From meadows along the way, the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness spreads out below. Gray limestone cliffs dominate the landscape. This part of the hike is seldom experienced by the crowds of people who prefer an interstate to a dirt road. On the descent, the trail is fairly easy to follow. Although, in one section a game trail continues down the ridge, while the real trail veers left. Watch for blazes.

At the bottom of the hill is Fields Gulch, a flat mile from Coulter Campground. For overnight trips camping is allowed at Coulter, but not at Meriwether. Meriwether is another flat mile farther.

After arriving at Meriwether by trail or boat, walk up the gulch for several hundred yards to the Vista Point turnoff. Turn left (north) for Vista Point. The Mann Gulch trail is a one hundred yards before the metal railings that mark

Vista Point. Turn right, uphill, and northeast. A Forest Service sign by the trail announces that the trail is not maintained.

The trail may not be maintained, but it is well traveled. A mile of switchbacks now lies between you and Mann Gulch. What was once a good trail has been cut by shortcuts and is overgrown in places. The shortcuts are much harder than the original trail, so try to stay on the switchbacks. These trails are well-worn and easy to follow. About half-way up is a blackened overhang called Devil's Kitchen, which is still marked by an old sign. Several points during the climb offer excellent views of the canyon below.

Once you reach the top, the trail fades away, but the view doesn't. Willow Peak is east up the ridge, and Beartooth Mountain is across the river. The winds on top tend to swirl like those that caused the blow-up. Burnt fallen trees lie parallel on the opposite slope showing the direction of winds that fed the fire. The difficulty of running up the opposite slope is obvious. Rockslides and thick grasses cover the steep slope of Mann Gulch. The south side of the gulch grows small densely packed ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir like the ones that fed the fire in 1949. Enough wind, enough heat, and enough lightning . . . it could happen again.

The Forest Service maintains the thirteen stone crosses where the firefighters died. But you cannot see them from the south ridge. Without binoculars, the crosses aren't visible until within several hundred yards. The tall grass hides these monuments well.

To reach the crosses, hike up the ridge 0.25 miles. Descend from the ridge traversing northeast a little up the gulch and angle over to the crosses. The opposite ridge is steep and the crosses are near the top of the ridge. These men were tough. It is amazing how high up the ridge they got before the fire engulfed them. Refer to the map for location of the crosses. A small talus slope marks the vicinity of the crosses.

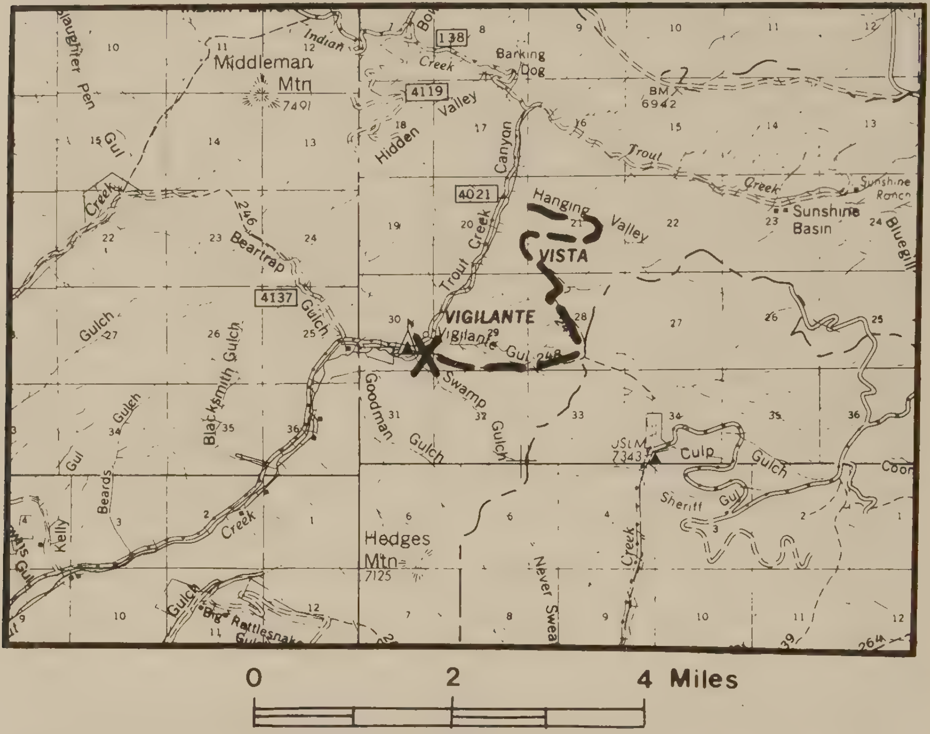
Return by climbing the south ridge back to the trail. This requires some bushwacking followed by a steep grade. The minimum reasonable amount of time for seeing the crosses from Meriwether Picnic Area is four hours. Remember to catch the boat or hike out before dark.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 80 *HANGING VALLEY*

General description: A steep, 12-mile day hike in a little-known area.
General location: 20 miles northeast of Helena.
Maps: Hogback Mountain and Snedaker Basin USGS Quads, and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: A deep, narrow canyon with impressive limestone towers.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,384 feet.
Season: June through October.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 449-5490.

The hike: After exploring this section of the Big Belt Mountains, you'll wonder how part of Utah, complete with narrow canyons and unusual rock formations, ended up in Montana.

HIKE 80 *HANGING VALLEY*


Middleman Mtn
7491
Indian Creek
Barking Dog
138
4119
4021
4137
Hidden Valley
Trout Creek Canyon
Hanging Valley
VISTA
VIGILANTE
Vigilante Gul 248
Trout Creek
BM 6942
Sunshine Ranch
Sunshine Basin
Bluegill
Beartrap Gulch
246
Blacksmith Gulch
Swamp Gulch
Goodman Gulch
Culp Gulch
Sheriff Gul
USLM 7343
Hedges Mtn
7125
Never Sweat
Creek
Big Rattlesnake Gulch
Kelly
Beards
Slaughter Pen
0
2
4 Miles

The trailhead lies at the Vigilante Campground in the Helena National Forest, six miles northeast of York on the old Figure Eight Route. To get to York, take County Road #280 northeast of Helena for fifteen miles, crossing the York Bridge. The Figure Eight Route used to go beyond Vigilante Campground until massive floods in May 1981 buried the road under tons of gravel in Trout Creek Canyon. Hanging Valley is actually a dry tributary of Trout Creek, entering the canyon from a point high on the southern wall. You'll be able to pick out where you've been from Trout Creek Canyon once you've taken the hike.

The trail (#247) starts at the back of the campground and is marked with a National Recreation Trail sign. The path climbs a dry hillside for three miles to a low pass between Trout Creek and Magpie Creek. During late May, the trail is lined with hundreds of pink fairyslippers and blue clematis just below the pass.

At the pass, turn left and proceed to the top of the mountain that forms the southern rim of Trout Creek Canyon. Here the views are tremendous on a clear day, with the Flint Creek Range appearing from over the Continental Divide to the west and the Spanish Peaks near Bozeman visible some one hundred airline miles to the south.

The trail is well-constructed and practically impossible to lose. Past the summit, the trail switchbacks down a heavily wooded slope for half a mile into Hanging Valley, past huge Douglas-firs that have escaped wildfires and loggers. The trail follows the dry watercourse into the canyon.

Limestone pinnacles fifty feet tall tower over the trail, which soon becomes a route just a few feet wide at the bottom of a narrow canyon. After the trail passes under a small natural bridge, you must descend a five-foot-high rock step in the trail, adding excitement to the trip. During heavy snow years, the trail at this point may be snow-choked and impassable into mid-June.

The trail dead-ends on the lip of a dry waterfall several hundred feet up a sheer rock face on the southern wall of Trout Creek Canyon—hence the name Hanging Valley. A metal fence installed by the Forest Service allows you to lean over and gawk at the canyon walls, which bear a close resemblance to those of Bryce Canyon in Utah.

Retrace your steps to Vigilante Campground, where you can briefly hike up Trout Creek Canyon and try to pick out Hanging Valley, high on the southern rim.

Aside from a few snowfields in the spring, the trail is waterless, so fill up your canteens at the campground. Although the twelve-mile round-trip can be done easily in one day by most well-conditioned hikers, there are a few dry campsites along the trail if you want to make it an overnighter. The trip may prove too steep for younger hikers, but it should not be missed by anyone wanting to see a part of the Southwest right here in Montana.—*Ed Madej and Rosemary Rowe*

Elkhorn Mountains, Helena Vicinity

Overview

Helena is lucky for two reasons: it is the state capital, and it is equidistant from Glacier and Yellowstone. From Helena a hiker can reach almost any hiking area in the state with a reasonable drive. But hiking opportunities abound just minutes from downtown Helena.

Southeast of Helena is the Elkhorn Mountains. They contain one of the largest unprotected tracts of wild land remaining in central Montana, with seven mountain lakes, thirty perennial streams, and five peaks higher than 8,000 feet. The Elkhorns formed 75 million years ago from volcanic lava flows. They are renowned for their wildlife, providing one of the largest expanses of public elk winter range in the country. Goshawk, lynx, and other species also thrive here.

HIKE 81 *RED MOUNTAIN*

General description: A short cross-country mountain climb.
General location: 18 miles southwest of Helena.
Maps: Jefferson City USGS Quad and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: A short climb with a super view on the outskirts of one of Montana's largest cities.
Difficulty: Moderate to difficult.
Elevation gain: 1,700 feet.
Season: June through September
For more information: Write District Ranger, Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 449-5490.

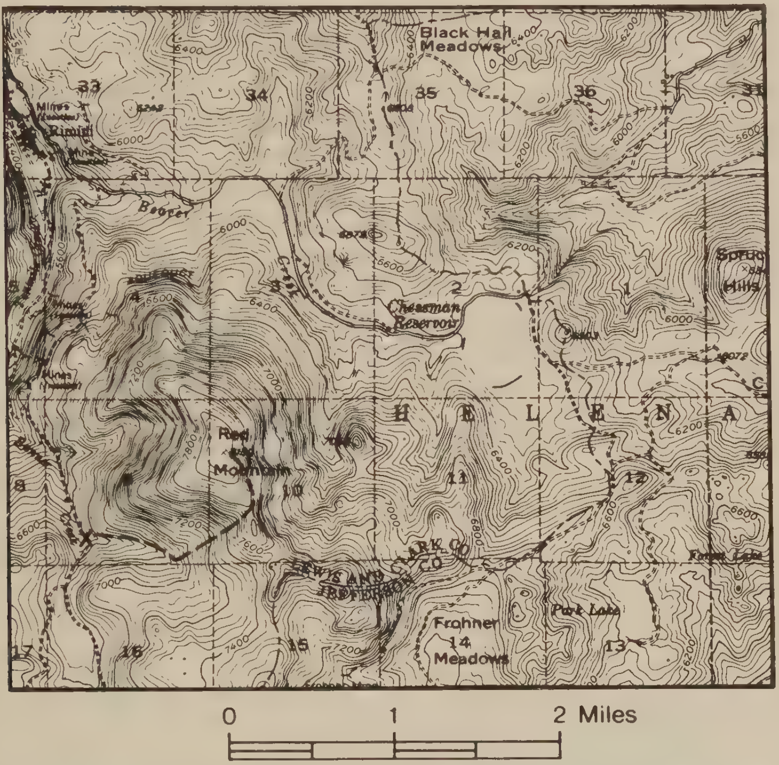
The hike: Montana has many mountains to climb, but not many are so close to a city nor so easily climbed. Red Mountain is one of those wonderful exceptions.

To start this hike, drive west from Helena on U.S. Highway 12 for nine miles to the Rimini turnoff. Turn left (south) and drive seven miles to the ghost town of Rimini. (Don't fret—Helena commuters have moved in and driven out the ghosts.) Drive south through Rimini and go another 3.6 miles. Park where the road takes a sharp right and climbs a steep hill, 0.3 miles past the City of Helena water ditch and cabin. The trail takes off to the left just before this sharp bend in the road.

This trailhead isn't signed and can be easily missed. Watch for an abandoned miner's cabin in the brush on your left and fifty yards before the trailhead. Also watch for a blaze on a ponderosa pine on the left edge of the road at the trailhead. If you come to a major fork in the road, you've driven about half a mile past the trailhead.

The trail, which is actually an abandoned mining road, starts out following a small, unnamed stream and goes past some mining ruins. Follow the stream

HIKE 81 *RED MOUNTAIN*


Black Hall Meadows
33
34
35
36
Beaver
Creek
Chessman Reservoir
Spruce Hills
H E L E N A
Red Mountain
10
11
12
Park Lake
Frohner
14
Meadows
13
15
16
17
LEWIS AND CLARK CO
JEFFERSON CO
0
1
2 Miles

about half a mile until it turns off to the right. Here, strike off straight uphill on a cross-country course. Head for a small pass that you'll see ahead and slightly to your left.

Although it's uphill all the way, there's only one really steep pitch in the three-mile trek to the summit of Red Mountain. After climbing this rock slide, you emerge on a saddle at the south side of Red Mountain. From this saddle, enjoy an easy walk to the summit.

The first part of the trail has good supplies of wild strawberries and huckleberries, plus plenty of wildflowers. The trip from the saddle to the summit goes through a forest of veterans of a war against the long, cruel winters at this 8,150-foot altitude. Some of the trees are more ghostly than the ghost town below.

The view from the summit of Red Mountain is one of Montana's grandest. On a clear day, you can see ten Montana counties. Mountain ranges in view include the Big Belt, Bridger, Gallatin, Madison, Ruby, Tobacco Root, Highland, Pintler, and Flint Creek. Also, you can see the Peerless Jenny, Sally Bell, Linda, Julia, Crescent, and other abandoned mines whose names have been lost in time.

Drinking water is available from the small stream at the start, but the rest of the trip is dry. Snowbanks usually cling to the summit until early July.

Although only a six-mile round-trip that any hiker can make in a day, you can camp on the summit. Be sure to check the weather forecast for a clear night, preferably at the full moon, so you can get all the benefits of sleeping so close to the stars.—*Herb B. Gloege*

HIKE 82 *SPRING MEADOW LAKE*

General description: A 1-mile trail along the lake that is perfect for wildlife viewing.
General location: Just west of Helena on Country Club Lane.
Maps: Helena USGS Quad, but not needed.
Special attractions: Spring Meadow Lake and its wildlife inhabitants.
Difficulty: Easy/Wheelchair accessible.
Season: All year.
Information: Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 444-4720.

The hike: In 1981, Spring Meadow State Recreation Area was purchased after a gravel pit filled with groundwater, restoring it to rich wildlife habitat.

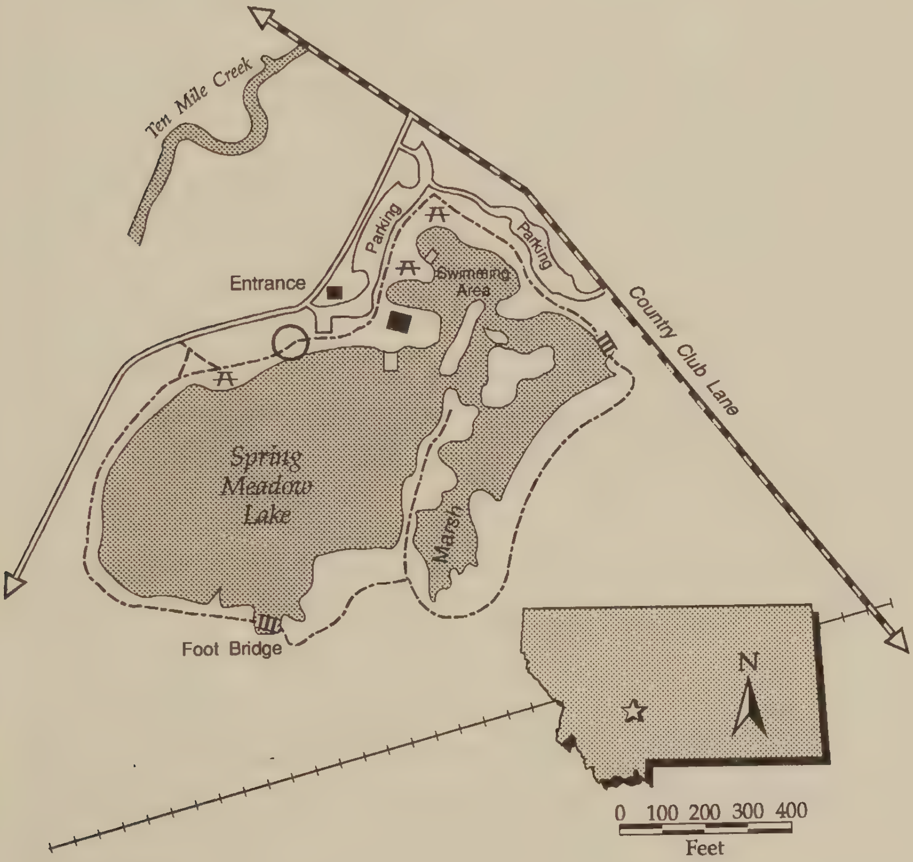
To find the trailhead, drive west on U.S. Highway 12 (Euclid Ave.) in Helena. Turn right on Country Club Lane before leaving town by the Red Roof Cafe. Follow country Club Lane for less than a mile. Spring Meadow Lake is on the left.

There is a users fee ($1 for anyone above eleven-years-old and .50 cents for those younger.) Pay at the building to your left as you drive in. Plenty of parking is available with restrooms available, too.

The hike follows a counter-clockwise direction around the lake. The path is hard-packed, level, and paved along the north shore. The trailhead is located on the west end of a beach. Here for .25 cents you can buy a nature trail brochure with descriptions of native plants and animals.

Spring Meadow Lake. Mary Ellen McDonald photo.

HIKE 82 *SPRING MEADOW LAKE*


Ten Mile Creek
Parking
Parking
Entrance
Swimming Area
Country Club Lane
Spring Meadow Lake
Marsh
Foot Bridge
N
0 100 200 300 400
Feet

Follow the path west past several picnic areas as it curves around the lake. Spring Meadow Lake lies on thick beds of gravel deposited by Ten Mile Creek. From these beds originate springs that feed the lake with fresh groundwater.

The water is home to yellow perch and largemouth bass. From various spots along the shore, bass can sometimes be seen sunning themselves close to shore. The shoreline supports willows and cottonwoods, providing some shade as you walk.

After 0.5 mile cross the footbridge over a shallow marshy section of the lake. Watch for families of waterfowl. Birdwatching is popular at Spring Meadow, and a birder's guide is helpful. Open water, marshes, trees, brush, and grasslands combine diverse habitats for many types birds.

The trail continues past a dark algae covered pool and the private land beyond to the right. The path goes away from the shoreline and passes through an area of the dry grasses that survive the usual hot dry summers of the Helena area. Here a trail veers off to the left, following a peninsula. The spur trail is not recommended for wheelchair travel due to the unimproved surface. The peninsula separates two very different habitats. On the left is the deep, clear spring-fed water. To the right lies shallow, dark marsh water, which is home to painted turtles and abundant insects.

If you take the path onto the peninsula, retrace your steps to the main trail or from the intersection continue east around the lake past the rest of the back-water area. Finally, cross the second footbridge back to the parking area.—*Russ Schneider*

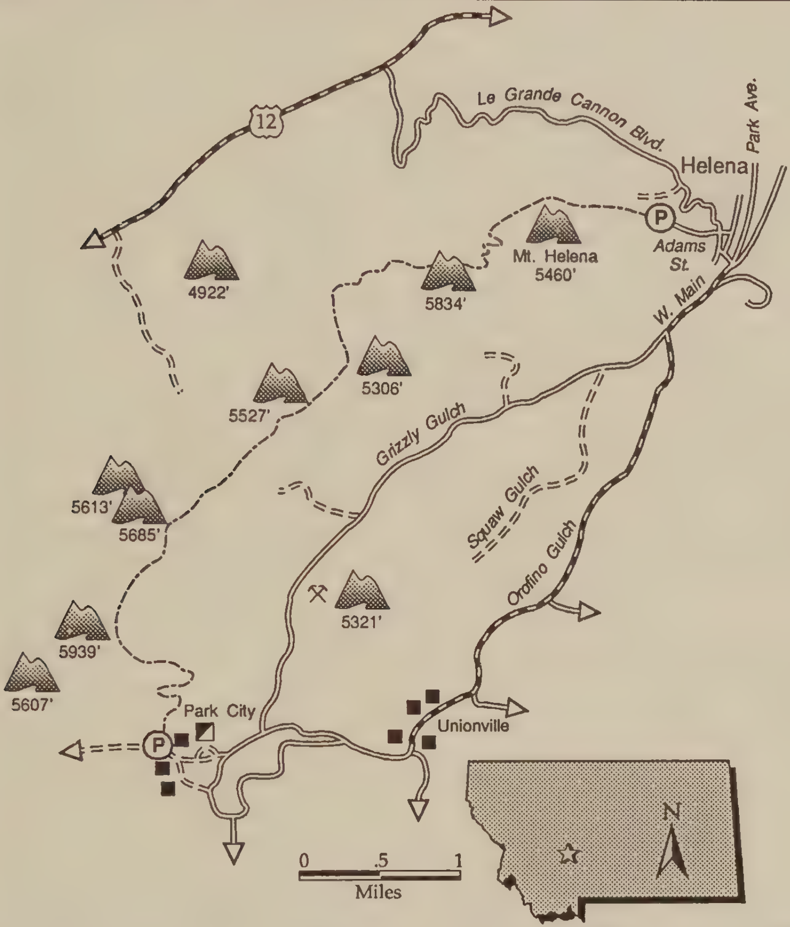
HIKE 83 *MOUNT HELENA RIDGE*

General description: A fairly moderate 7-mile day hike.
General location: On the south edge of Helena.
Maps: Helena USGS Quad and Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map. (Neither map shows the trail.)
Special attraction: Superb east-of-the-divide scenery from a trail starting at the city limits of Helena.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,000 feet.
Elevation loss: 1,300 feet.
Season: May through October
For more information: Write District Ranger, Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 449-5490.

The hike: This seven-mile, scenic, point-to-point trail has been designated a National Recreational Trail by the Forest Service.

The northern end of the trail is probably the easiest trailhead in the state to find. Simply drive up Adams Street in southwest Helena until it dead-ends at the Mount Helena parking lot on the city limits. To set up the shuttle, drive south on Park Avenue until it forks, just out of town. Take the right fork (Grizzly Gulch) and drive five miles up the well-maintained dirt road to where another dirt road near Park City will bend off to the right. The upper trailhead is 0.5 mile up this road. Look for a small "trail" sign marking another right turn.

HIKE 83 *MOUNT HELENA RIDGE*


12
Le Grande Cannon Blvd.
Park Ave.
Helena
P
Adams St.
Mt. Helena 5460'
4922'
5834'
W. Main
5306'
5527'
Grizzly Gulch
5613'
5685'
Squaw Gulch
Orofino Gulch
5321'
5939'
5607'
Park City
P
Unionville
0
.5
1
Miles
N

Go a short distance to a parking area. Leave your other vehicle here until you finish the hike, or start here and hike toward Helena.

Mount Helena is a 620-acre city park with about twenty miles of hiking trails. There are at least three ways to hike the first three miles, but the easiest route goes west from the city's parking lot at the eastern edge of Mount Helena. Follow this well-maintained trail for half a mile until it forks. Take the right-hand fork (Prairie Trail) and stay on it for 1.5 miles until you reach a trail junction with a picnic table on top of a small saddle (just past a series of switchbacks).

If you chose to take the left (steeper) fork, the trail will pass right under Mount Helena's northern cliffs and intersect with the Backside Trail, which will lead to the picnic table.

At the picnic table, take the right-hand trail that goes west along a ridge. Stay on this trail all the way—about five miles from this point—to the parking area above Park City.

About a quarter-mile past the picnic table, the trail runs through an open grassy saddle and temporarily disappears in the ungrazed grass. At this point, the trail bends to the left to go around the eastern edge of a small knob.

In another quarter-mile, the trail takes a sharp right. Be careful not to follow the trail going straight (south).

After these two confusing spots, the trail is easy to follow for two miles or so. Then the ridge becomes a series of small hills. Stay close to the top of the ridge through this one-mile section. The most confusing section begins after crossing a fence using a Forest Service stile, or stairs. Stay alert and stay on the crest of the ridge and you won't get lost.

At about the five-mile mark, the trail intersects with a jeep road coming up from the left (east) from Grizzly Gulch. Follow this jeep track for another quarter-mile, until the trail resumes again on the left.

From here to Park City, the trail is well-marked. This is probably the most scenic part of the hike, as you can often look back and see the Mount Helena Ridge and Mount Helena itself, which is several hundred feet in elevation below you. The city of Helena also appears frequently in the distance.

The last half-mile of the trail switchbacks down a south-facing, grassy slope just above Park City. A small cluster of rural ranchettes dot the valley. When you reach a jeep road, walk down it (east) to the trailhead where your vehicle should be waiting for you.

Since this ridge-top trail is rather dry, you'd better bring your own water.

You might want to give the Forest Service a call and thank them for developing such a fine hiking trail so close to an urban area.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 84 *LITTLE BLACKFOOT MEADOWS*

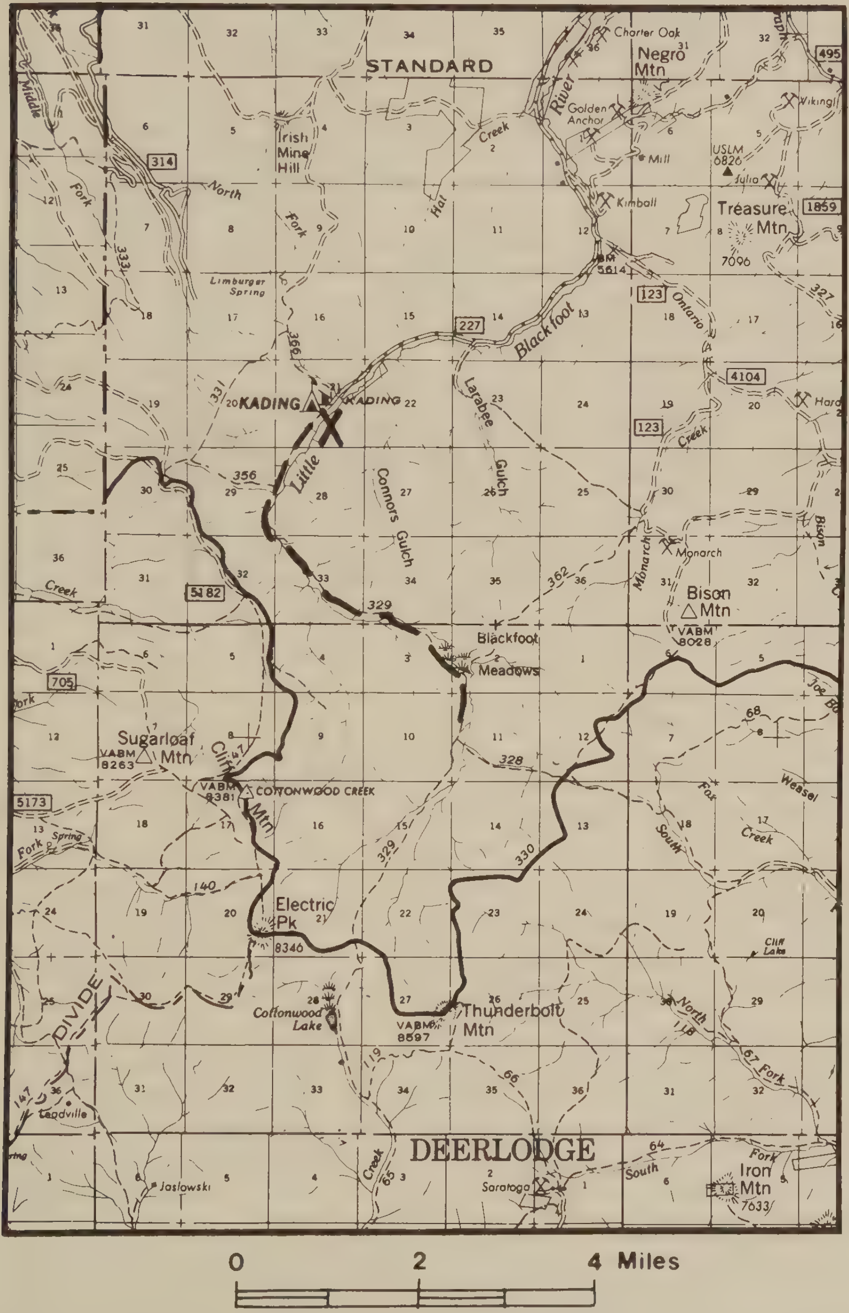
General description: A 10-mile round-trip along the upper reaches of the Little Blackfoot River.
General location: 20 miles southwest of Helena.
Maps: Basin USGS Quad and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: A large, marshy meadow in a subalpine basin.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 400 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 449-5490.

The hike: Little Blackfoot Meadows, within easy driving distance of Helena, is a one-way hike over gentle terrain. This large subalpine basin along the Continental Divide receives heavy use during hunting season but is less frequented at other times of the year.

To reach the trailhead, turn south off U.S. Highway 12 one mile east of Elliston onto Forest Road #227. After fifteen miles of gravel road, you will pass Kading Campground on your left. The road turns into a jeep track just past the campground. Either park here or proceed one mile farther along the jeep track to the end of the road.

Park here and continue on foot along the jeep track (Trail #329). After barely a mile, the jeep track forks. Take the fork leading downhill (left) to the banks

HIKE 84 *LITTLE BLACKFOOT MEADOWS*


STANDARD
Charter Oak
Negro Mtn
Golden Anchor
Mill
Kimball
USLM 6826
Julio
Vikingll
Treasure Mtn
7096
1859
495
Irish Mine Hill
314
Middle
Fork
North
Fork
Hat
Creek
River
333
Limburger Spring
366
331
227
Blackfoot
BM 5614
123
Ontario
327
4104
Hard
KADING
KADING
Little
Larabee
Gulch
Connors Gulch
Creek
356
Bison
Monarch
Monarch
362
Bison Mtn
VABM 8028
329
Blackfoot Meadows
5182
Creek
705
Fork
Sugarloaf Mtn
VABM 8263
Cliff Mtn
VABM 8381
COTTONWOOD CREEK
5173
Spring
Fork
328
Joe Bo
68
Weasel
Creek
South
Fork
329
330
140
Electric Pk
8346
Cliff Lake
DIVIDE
Cottonwood Lake
Thunderbolt Mtn
VABM 8597
North
Fork
67
19
66
147
Leadville
DEERLODGE
Creek
65
64
South
Fork
Saratoga
Iron Mtn
7633
Joslowski
0
2
4 Miles

of the Little Blackfoot, crossing a new footbridge that was built to replace an old log bridge swept away by floods in May 1981. Rainbow and brookies frequent the pools along this stretch of stream, so bring your fishing rod along.

Continuing up the east bank of the stream, the trail passes through some low-lying marshy areas before climbing a dry side hill. Good views of the meadows and the mountain-rimmed basin can be obtained by briefly leaving the trail and climbing uphill into the obvious open area, just before the second crossing of the Little Blackfoot.

From the second crossing, it's an easy stroll of about a mile to the Little Blackfoot Meadows. If you want to make this an overnighter, campsites are plentiful on the higher ground surrounding the beaver ponds. Day trippers should turn around at this point, which will make the hike a solid eight-mile round-trip.

The meadows make a good base camp for exploring the surrounding roadless country. Trails lead up to the rounded, rocky summits of Cliff Mountain, Electric Peak, Thunderbolt Mountain, and Bison Mountain on the Continental Divide.

This area is currently under consideration for wilderness designation as the Blackfoot Meadows—Electric Peak Wilderness.

For those wishing a gentle introduction to hiking or overnight camping, there could be no better place to start than with a trip to Little Blackfoot Meadows.—*Rosemary Rowe*

HIKE 85 *MANLEY PARK*

General description: An overnight hike into the heart of the Elkhorn Mountains.
General location: 20 miles southeast of Helena.
Maps: Clancy USGS Quad and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Gorgeous high-elevation meadows and a large waterfall.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,490 feet.
Elevation loss: 2,690 feet.
Season: June through October.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Townsend Ranger District, 415 S. Front Box 29, Townsend, MT 59644, or call (406) 226-3425.

The hike: Instead of snowcapped peaks, the Elkhorns feature lush, high-elevation meadows surrounded by gently rolling forests. Poe and Manley parks offer excellent examples.

When Forest Service planners rate wilderness quality, they often give areas of high, craggy peaks the highest score. The Elkhorns have a limited supply of such geology, but the scenery still rivals that of many Montana mountain ranges.

To find the trailhead, drive eleven miles south of Townsend on U.S. Highway 287. Then take a right onto County Road #285 and drive nine miles west to Radersburg. Go through town and follow the only major gravel road (known locally as the Hall Creek Road, which might not be shown on maps) heading northwest from Radersburg. Follow this road eighteen miles to the trailhead,

Bull elk in a September battle. Harry Engels photo.

watching for a Forest Service sign saying Poe Park. The trailhead is three miles past the road plowed into Crow Creek Falls.

From the trailhead, it's a two-mile stroll into Poe Park. Although you gain about eight hundred feet in these two miles, most of the climb comes in the first half-mile.

The view from Poe Park is something to behold, especially the carpets of wildflowers. However, don't gawk so much that you miss a trail marker. The trail temporarily disappears in the lush grass, but you can stay on it if you keep your eyes peeled for Forest Service trail markers and blazes on trees. If you lose the trail, head for the west edge of the park, where the trail enters the timber and again becomes easy to follow.

When you reach Little Tizer Creek, you hit a trail junction. You can get to Crow Creek via either fork, but if you go right you miss Manley Park, which is at least as gorgeous as Poe Park and the view is even better. So bear left.

Watch carefully for another junction less than a mile after Little Tizer Creek.

Most hikers prefer to camp at Manley Park, but the lack of water there makes it a less than perfect campsite. Either you must camp at Little Tizer Creek or haul enough water up to Manley Park. If you search the southwest corner of Poe Park, you can find a spring at the headwaters of Dewey Creek. Water also is available at Crow Creek. Hauling water might be work, but the view from Manley Park rewards your extra effort.

The trail in Manley Park is easy to follow until about halfway through; then it gradually disappears as you approach the timber on the north side.

With some care, you can find where it leaves the big meadow.

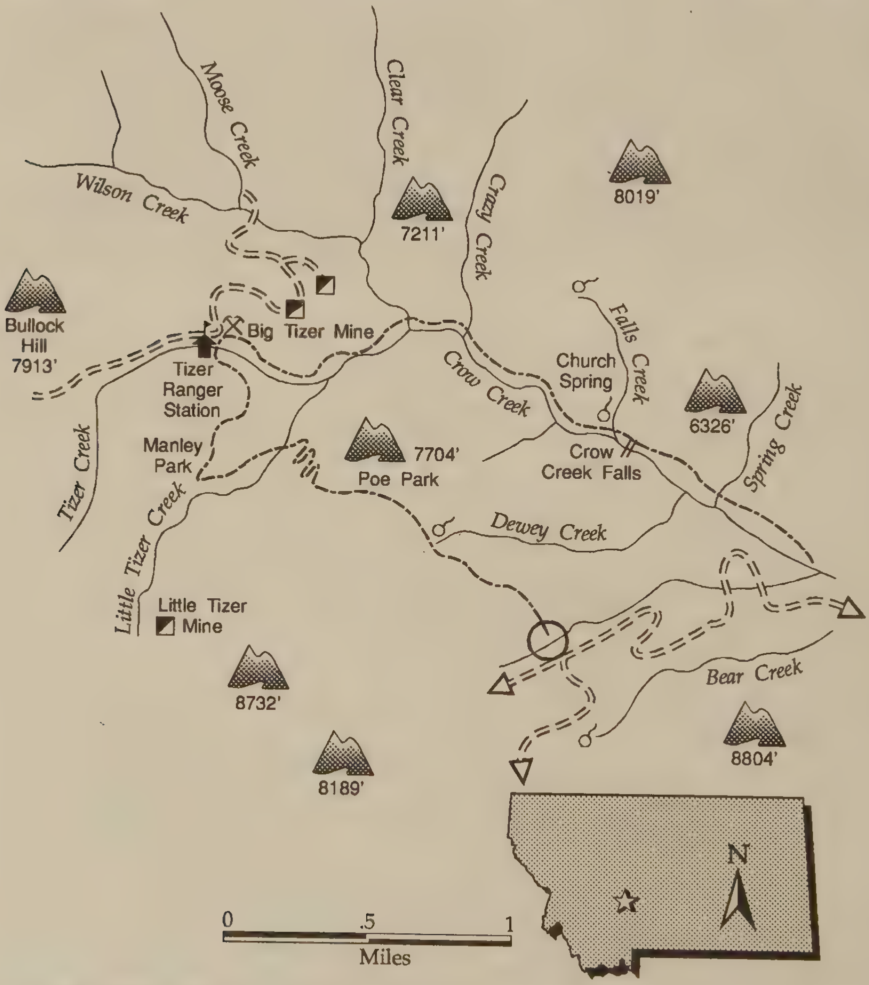
After a short, steep drop down to Crow Creek, you hit the Crow Creek Trail on the north side of the stream. You come out by the abandoned Wildcat Mine and a private cabin—the only signs of civilization along your otherwise remote hike.

From here, the trail follows Crow Creek for about eight miles back to Hall Creek Road. If you don't have a vehicle there, you'll have to hike or jog up the road to the Poe Park trailhead.

The trail goes through a parcel of private land (an old mining claim) around beautiful Crow Creek Falls. You might have to scramble around this private land in the narrow canyon; the Forest Service does not maintain the trail through the property.

Quite a controversy surrounds this private landholding. Crow Creek Falls

HIKE 85 *MANLEY PARK*


Moose Creek
Clear Creek
Wilson Creek
7211'
Crazy Creek
8019'
Bullock Hill 7913'
Big Tizer Mine
Tizer Ranger Station
Crow Creek
Church Spring
Falls Creek
6326'
Spring Creek
Manley Park
Tizer Creek
7704'
Poe Park
Crow Creek Falls
Little Tizer Creek
Dewey Creek
Little Tizer Mine
8732'
Bear Creek
8804'
8189'
N
0
.5
1
Miles

was once public land, legally given away to gold miners under the archaic 1872 Mining Law. This obsolete, destructive law allows miners to take over public land that may or may not have mineral potential and close it to public use. The miner who inherited the old claim at the falls decided in 1981 to plow a road up to the site and obliterate the trail, all without the permission of the Forest Service. After the miner illegally bulldozed the road, received a minimal fine for his misdeed, and caused quite a public controversy, the Forest Service meekly granted him legal access to dredge-mine the falls, completing the desecration of the crown jewel of the Elkhorns.

The controversy continued, and in 1988 the miner was found in contempt of court and subsequently left the area. Crow Creek Falls has been restored, and although the mining claim is still private property, you shouldn't encounter any difficulties crossing the area.

If you stay overnight in Poe or Manley park, you stand a good chance of seeing elk in the early morning or late evening. Crow Creek has a good supply of pan-sized brookies and rainbows for anglers who like to fish smaller streams.

The Elkhorn Mountains have a wilderness quality unlike other ranges—a quiet, gentle, easy beauty. Technical mountain climbers might frown on the Elkhorns, but for the rest of us, it's difficult to surpass. And it's so accessible—close to Bozeman, Butte, and Helena.

But the Forest Service doesn't see it that way. The agency has opposed wilderness designation for the Elkhorns, which limits the chance of these mountains ever receiving lasting protection. The Elkhorns are designated by the Forest Service as a special management area dedicated to the production of big game, particularly elk, which provides some protection.

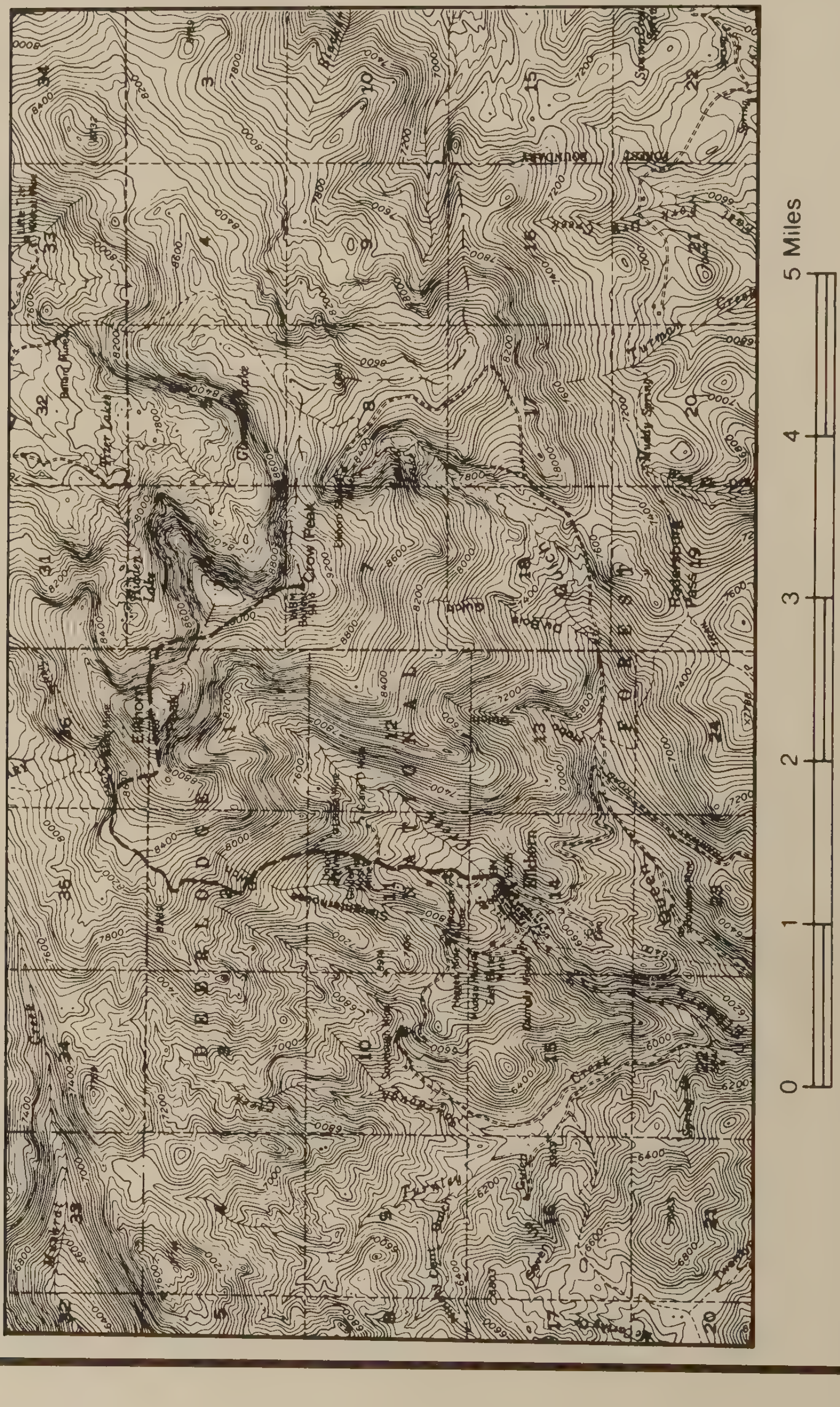
What the public wants—wilderness or development—may mean the difference for the Elkhorns, so pass your comments along to the Forest Service and your elected representatives.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 86 *ELKHORN AND CROW PEAKS*

General description: A strenuous day hike.
General location: 15 miles southeast of Helena.
Maps: Clancy USGS Quad and either the Deerlodge National Forest Map or the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: Views of the entire Elkhorn Mountains from the two highest peaks in the range.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,900 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Jefferson Ranger District, Deerlodge National Forest, 405 E. Legion, P.O. Box F, Whitehall, MT 59759, or call (406) 287-3223.

The hike: If you're an experienced enough hiker that you're considering cross-country hiking or rock climbing, you might use this hike to break the ice. Although more than half the hike is trailless and it goes to the summits of the highest peaks in the Helena area, it's reasonably safe, and there's very little chance you'll get lost.

HIKE 86 *ELKHORN AND CROW PEAKS*


Crow Peak
Hidden Lake
Elkhorn
Tizer Lakes
Rodenberg Pass
Muddy Spring
BOUNDARY
DEERLODGE
NATIONAL
FOREST
0
1
2
3
4
5 Miles

The trail begins at Elkhorn, a historic mining camp on the southern end of the Elkhorn Mountains. To get there from Helena, drive twenty-eight miles south on Interstate 15 to Boulder. Take the Boulder exit from the interstate and go five miles south of town on Montana Highway 69. Here turn left onto a gravel road. There is a large sign for Elkhorn marking this turnoff.

The gravel road immediately crosses the Boulder River and then dead-ends. Turn right and follow the same gravel road for about thirteen miles to Elkhorn, bearing left at two junctions along the way. Go through Elkhorn and park at the northeast corner of town just before the road turns south to the cemetery. The trail—actually a jeep road—heads north out of town.

Most hikers start walking here, but if you have a four-wheeler you can drive another mile on the jeep road until you see the road jut off to the right and head up a steep grade. Park here even though there's a sign saying "Four-wheel-drive Vehicles Only." In reality, the road to the Iron Mine is too rough for most vehicles. On the Forest Service map, it's marked as Trail #72, so it must be more suited to Vibram soles than steel-belted radials.

From Elkhorn, hike 2.75 miles to the Iron Mine, an abandoned mining camp on the west slope of Elkhorn Peak. Here, leave the trail and head straight up for about a half-mile until you reach the top of the ridge. Follow the ridge north for about another mile to the top of Elkhorn Peak. After leaving the Iron Mine Trail, it's cross-country hiking.

On the ridge top, you're 2,800 feet above Elkhorn, and the view is something to behold, especially to the north where you can see the entire Tizer Basin,

Pika, a delightful little denizen of most high rocky slopes. Harry Engels photo.

the heart of the Elkhorn Mountains. To the southeast lies 9,414-foot Crow Peak, which is slightly higher than Elkhorn Peak (9,381 feet).

Pick your way to Crow Peak along the saddle between the two mountains. Be sure to bear slightly to the north so that you can look down steep cliffs into Hidden Lake and, a little farther on, Glenwood Lake. Both lakes are nestled in steep, glacier-scoured cirques with sheer cliffs on three sides and openings only on the north.

From the Iron Mine to Crow Peak, watch for mountain goats, a favorite of hikers in this area. The Elkhorn/Crow complex supports fair numbers of these white-clad mountaineers. Also prepare your heart for the surprise flush of a blue grouse from the weather-beaten whitebark pines between the two peaks.

Unless you spend too much time taking in the vistas, you can easily make it to Crow Peak and back (about ten miles total distance) in one full day. It is, however, a rugged, cross-country hike that may be too tough for small children or poorly conditioned hikers.

Bring drinking water, as there's only one small stream (about halfway to the Iron Mine), and even that one may dry up by late summer. Snow clings to the area into June and even July in heavy snow years, so plan a late summer or early fall conquest. Mosquitoes can be a problem early in the season at the Iron Mine.

The Elkhorns were not designated wilderness, but managing the area for wildlife should minimize destructive development of the area. Let the Forest Service know your thoughts on this matter.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 87 *CASEY PEAK*

General description: A day hike up the most prominent mountain in the northern Elkhorns.

General location: 10 miles southeast of Helena.

Maps: Clancy USGS Quad and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.

Special attraction: Good views of the Helena Valley and the Elkhorn Mountains.

Difficulty: Moderate.

Elevation gain: 3,419 feet.

Elevation loss: 3,419 feet.

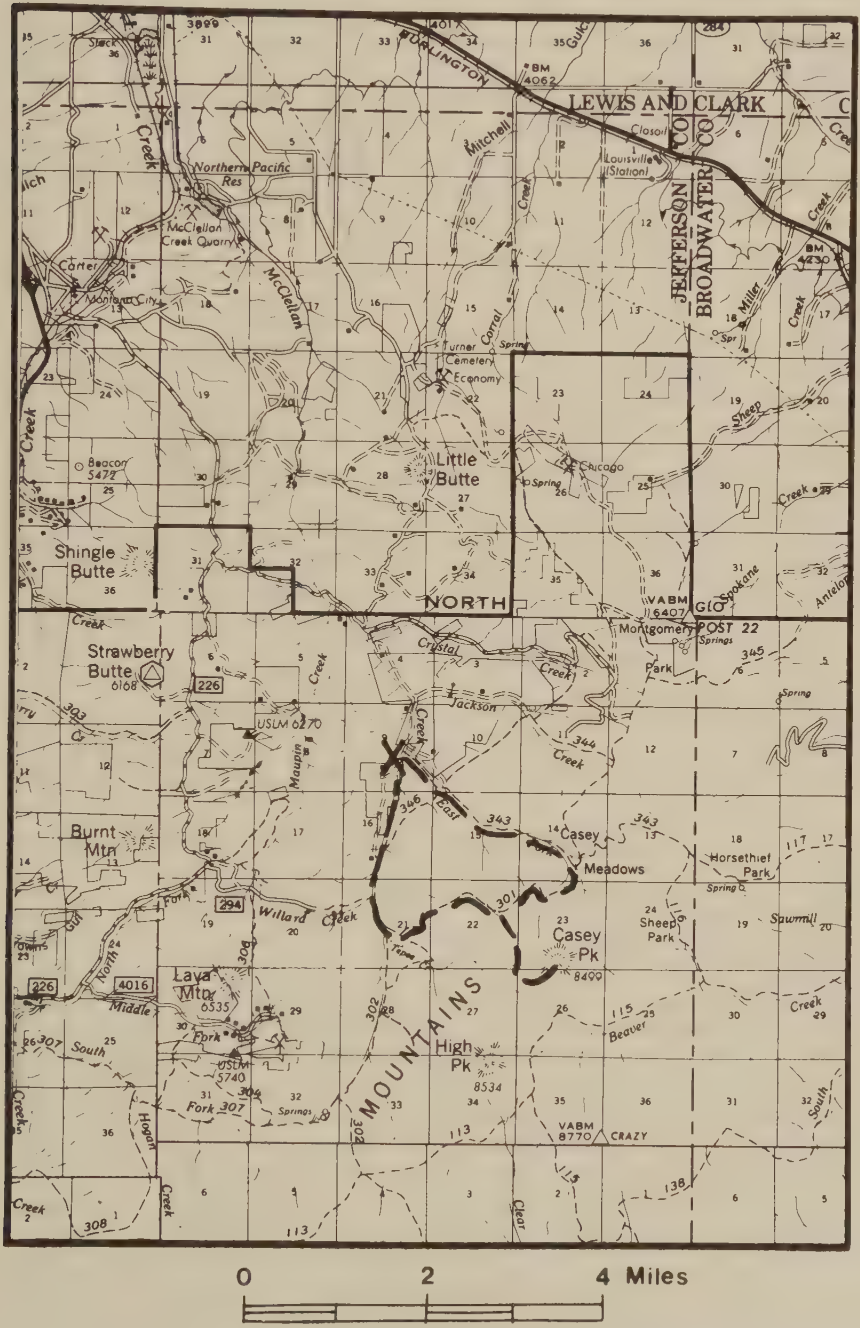
Season: June through September.

For more information: Write the District Ranger, Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar, Helena, MT 59601, or call (406) 449-5490.

The hike: Casey Peak dominates the skyline to the southeast of Montana's capital city. Although somewhat less impressive than Crow and Elkhorn peaks in the southern part of the range, a trip to the summit of Casey is well worth the time, especially if you live and work within sight of the peak.

To reach the trailhead, take Interstate 15 south from Helena. At Montana City, exit east onto a paved road. Within half a mile, turn right at a school onto a road that turns to gravel. Follow this road 1.5 miles until Forest Road #294 departs to the left. Follow FR #294 until you pass Jackson Creek. Continue past Jackson Creek to the next turnoff to the left, a small road with

HIKE 87 *CASEY PEAK*


BURLINGTON
LEWIS AND CLARK CO
JEFFERSON CO
BROADWATER CO
BM 4062
BM 4230
Closon
Louisville (Station)
Mitchell
Creek
Northern Pacific Res
McClellan Creek Quarry
McClellan
Carter
Montana City
Corral
Turner Cemetery
Economy
Spring
Miller
Sheep
Beacon 5472
Little Butte
Chicago
Shingle Butte
NORTH
VABM 6407
GLO
Spokane
Antelope
Montgomery Park
POST 22
Springs
Strawberry Butte 6168
226
303
USLM 6270
Maupin
Crystal
Jackson
East
346
343
344
345
Casey Meadows
Horsethief Park
Burnt Mtn
Willard Creek
Fork
294
301
Casey Pk 8499
Sheep Park
Sawmill
Tepee
Lava Mtn 6535
304
4016
North
Middle
South
307
USLM 5740
Fork 307
Springs
302
MOUNTAINS
High Pk 8534
115
Beaver
117
VABM 8770
CRAZY
113
Hogan
308
Clear
138
0
2
4 Miles

a locked gate. Park here. The trail begins in the woods just past the turnoff and bypasses the private inholding to which the road leads.

Casey Meadows and Casey Peak were directly in the path of the 47,900-acre Warm Springs Creek Fire in the summer of 1988. While the trail routes are unchanged, the hiking experience will certainly change with the passage of time, offering you an excellent opportunity to view Mother Nature's revegetation process firsthand. A note of caution: Be aware of the danger of falling burned trees when hiking and camping within the burned area.

Trail #343 ascends gradually through the once-forested slopes along the East Fork of McClellan Creek to Casey Meadows, a large open area. Do not head out into the meadows. Hug the treeline on your right, and soon you will see where Trail #301 heads toward Teepee Creek over the shoulder of Casey Peak to the south. A trail sign marks the junction.

Hike the Teepee Creek Trail until a signed trail to the summit of Casey Peak departs to your left. This trail will take you all the way to the summit with no scrambling involved. All you need is determination.

Casey's summit is a large rubble heap crowned by the remains of a well-weathered and severely blasted fire lookout. To the north spread commanding views of the Helena Valley and the Big Belt Mountains.

When you've torn yourself away from the summit, there are two choices for your trip down. If you are short on time and darkness is near, retrace your steps down McClellan Creek to the trailhead. If plenty of daylight remains, follow the summit trail back down to Trail #301 and continue on it to the left. Trail #301 will intersect with Trail #302, which follows Teepee Creek northward to your car. These two trails are hard to follow in places where they wind through meadows and disappear into the burn, so you'll need some extra time for trail-hunting.

The Casey Meadows area is popular in the winter with cross-country skiers. The lower parts of the trail usually are icy, but the meadows generally have good powder. Casey Peak sometimes is ascended on skis in winter, but this requires a two-day trip with a base camp in the meadows.—*Rosemary Rowe*

Big Belt-Bridger Mountains

Overview

The Big Belt Mountains and the Bridger Mountains are both continuations of the precambrian belt formation that caused the Gates of the Mountains, Rocky Mountain Front and mountains northward. The pale gray mudstone and white limestone form layers of sedimentary rock the heart of this mountain range. The Big Belts are home to lodgepole, Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and, whitebark pine at higher elevations. Elk, deer, and antelope frequent the forest and grassy hills around the peaks. Local residents hike, hunt, and fish in the Big Belts, but not much information is available for tourists. The beauty of these mountains is more subtle than the grandeur of Glacier or the Missions.

The Bridgers are probably better known for their extreme skiing than for their hiking opportunities. Though several hikes in the Bridgers can take you high above treeline for views of the Crazy Mountains to the east and the Gallatin Range to the south.

HIKE 88 *BOULDER BASIN*

General description: A 6-mile hike to the top of the Big Belt Divide and three lakes.
General location: 10 miles north of Townsend in the Big Belt Mountains.
Maps: Boulder-Baldy USGS Quads and Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Boulder Lakes, views of the Missouri river valley, Camas Creek Valley, and Castle Mountains.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 912 ft.
Elevation loss: 962 ft.
Season: Late June to September.
Information: District Ranger, Townsend Ranger District, Helena National Forest, Box 29, Townsend, MT 59644, or call (406) 266-3425.

The hike: This hike is comparable to any other hike in Montana. These high mountain lakes offer scenery, solitude, and the simple joy of a good hike.

To find the trailhead, drive 2.5 miles east of Townsend on U.S. Highway 12 to Montana Highway 284 and turn left, heading north for twelve miles to the Duck Creek Road turnoff. Turn right on Duck Creek Road for an additional twelve miles to road #139-F1 and turn left. Drive for two miles until reaching the parking lot next to the spring. Head north of the parking lot across a meadow to the trailhead of Big Belt Divide Trail. Turn left at the sign for Boulder Lakes and begin climbing.

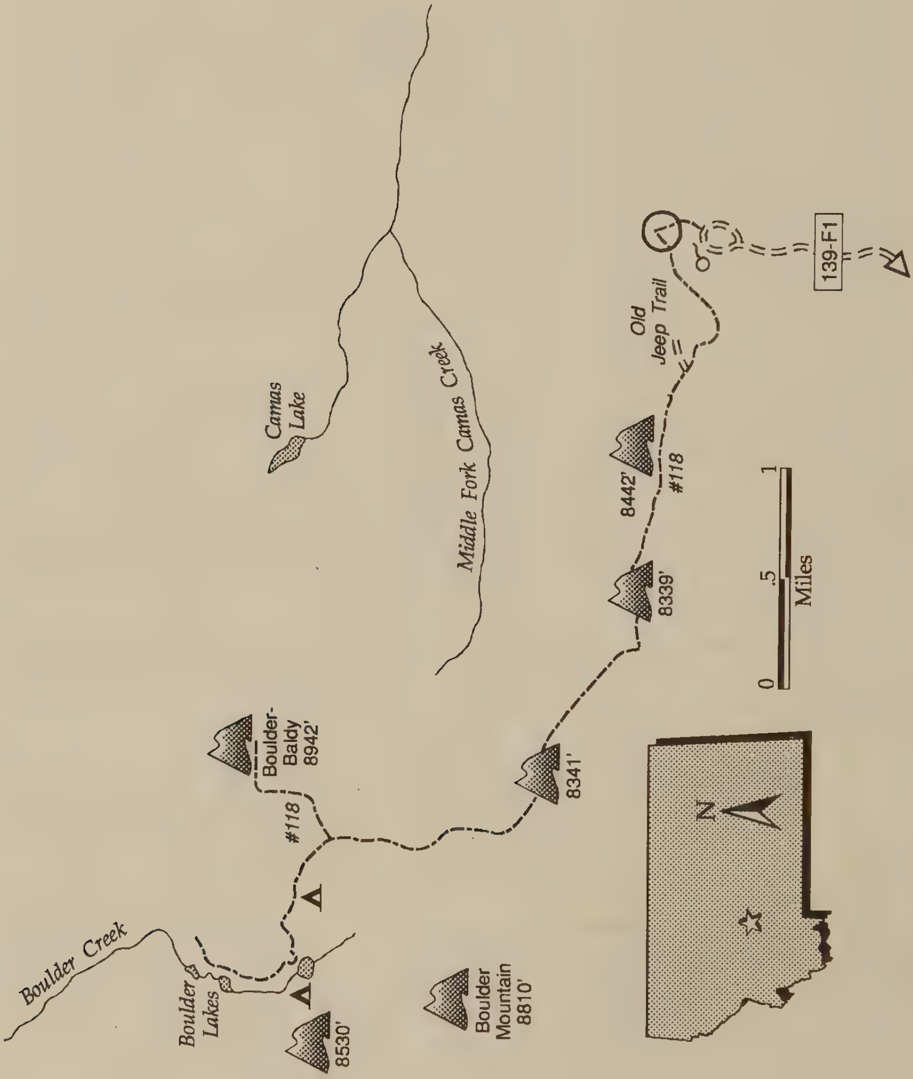
The first mile of the hike is a climb and doesn't allow for much of a warm-up. The trail traverses across a field of sagebrush. Sagebrush is remarkable plant flourishing at 8,000 feet without much water. Though it does not grow as tall here compared to the lowland variety.

Water is not available along the ridgetop so carry plenty.

At the top of the climb, a jeep trail joins the trail from the right. It looks more like a wide two-person trail than a road. Hikers can walk side by side. A unique whitebark pine forest covers of the highest point of the hike. Then, the trail descends slightly along the ridge. At this point, the hardest part of the hike is over. The next four miles the trail follows relatively flat terrain and descends through lodgepole pine. To the east, you can see the Camas Creek Valley proposed for wilderness designation. It hasn't been logged like the slopes along the drive up to the trailhead. Before descending to the lakes take the Boulder Lakes trail that veers off of the main trail 0.5 mile to the upper lake. Turn left at the intersection. (The main trail to the right continues up Boulder-Baldy Mountain.) After turning left, the trail descends almost a thousand feet into the Boulder Basin. There is a nice campsite on the left side of the trail 0.25 miles before the lake. Another campsite is west of the outlet at the upper lake. The upper lake is below Boulder Mountain to the south. It has no fish, but in spring when the snow melts buttercups cover the southeast shore.

The next, lower, lake is smaller and full of good-sized brook trout. Any of the three lakes in this basin can provide a memorable camping trip. It is a good idea to camp at the upper lakes to shorten the distance of carrying packs. Use an established fire ring.

HIKE 88 *BOULDER BASIN*


Boulder Creek
Boulder Lakes
8530'
Boulder Mountain 8810'
#118
Boulder-Baldy 8942'
8341'
Camas Lake
Middle Fork Camas Creek
8339'
8442'
#118
Old Jeep Trail
139-F1
0
.5
1
Miles
N

The hike out is easier than the one in but just as long. It follows the same trail. For a spectacular view of the Big Belts turn left and go up to Boulder-Baldy Mountain. This is a good side trip on the way out. If camping overnight, you can leave your pack at the trail intersection for the climb.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 89 *EDITH-BALDY BASIN*

General description: A moderate, overnight round-trip for beginners or a rugged loop for experienced hikers.
General location: 30 miles southeast of Helena in the Big Belt Mountains.
Maps: Mount Edith and Duck Creek Pass USGS Quads, and the Helena National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: A lake-filled basin in a small mountain range.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,000 feet.
Elevation loss: 800 feet.
Season: Mid-June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Townsend Ranger District Helena National Forest, Box 29, Townsend, MT 59644, or call (406) 266-3425.

The hike: Driving along the highway and seeing Mount Edith and Mount Baldy in the distance, you would never guess that a spectacular, lake-filled basin, accessible to all hikers, lies nestled in their northeastern shadow.

To begin the hike, drive east of Townsend on U.S. Highway 12 for about three miles and turn left (north) onto the major paved road (#284) skirting the east side of Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Drive north for about five miles and turn right (east) onto the well-marked Duck Creek Pass Road. Follow this road for about twelve miles to the top of Duck Creek Pass. The trail begins on the right (south) side of the road.

A new trail has been constructed from Duck Creek Road to 9,472-foot Mount Baldy. Hikers bypass the old jeep trail. Be sure to bring water along because there isn't any for the first half of the hike.

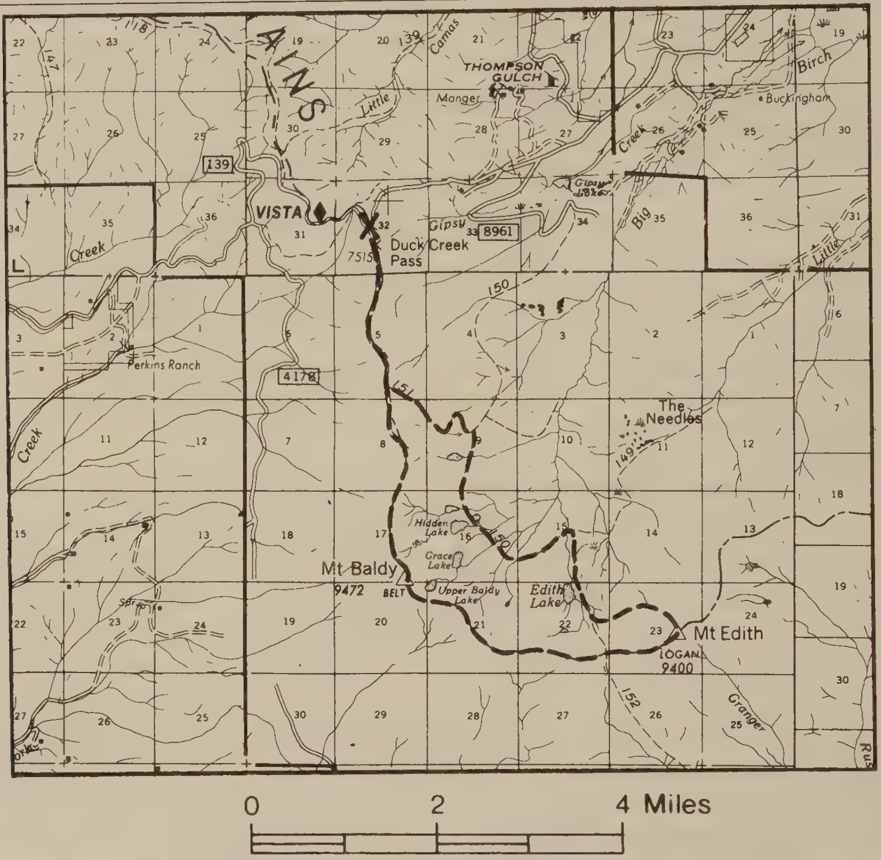
At the microwave tower, there is a trail that drops off the ridge to the east into Hidden Lake. If you aren't an experienced hiker in good condition, take this trail for about four miles into the basin. However, if you're in good shape and knowledgeable about cross-country hiking, you can make a spectacular loop out of this hike.

If you want a shorter, easier trip, you can camp at Hidden Lake or continue on to any of the other lakes, set up a base camp, and stay for several days, visiting new lakes every day. Then you can retrace your steps to Duck Creek Pass.

If you're more ambitious, you can head cross-country toward the summit of Mount Baldy. All along this ridge, the vistas are incredible, with the Smith River drainage to the east and Canyon Ferry Reservoir to the west. Expect to see mountain goats around the summit of Baldy and Edith.

After leaving the top of Baldy, you drop rapidly for a quarter-mile into the saddle between the two peaks. Then you gradually work your way over several false summits to the top of 9,384-foot Mount Edith, with Upper Baldy Lake

HIKE 89 *EDITH-BALDY BASIN*


THOMPSON GULCH
Manger
Camas
Little
Birch
Buckingham
Creek
Big
Gipsy Lake
VISTA
Duck Creek Pass
7515
Gipsy Creek
8961
139
150
151
4178
Perkins Ranch
Creek
The Needles
149
Hidden Lake
Grace Lake
Mt Baldy
9472
BELT
Upper Baldy Lake
Edith Lake
Mt Edith
LOGAN
9400
152
Granger
Little
0
2
4 Miles

on your left most of the way. It's four miles between the two summits, but it will be four miles of the most scenic hiking you've experienced. Although it's cross-country, the terrain is fairly easy to traverse. In addition to mountain goats, this area seems to attract unusually large numbers of golden eagles.

From the top of Edith, you can see a penetrating limestone formation known as the "needles" to the north and Edith Lake to the northwest. Follow a series of rock cairns toward this gorgeous, high-altitude lake.

About a mile before Edith Lake, you intersect the main trail through the Edith-Baldy Basin. Turn right onto this trail (which you crossed on the way to the summit of Edith), and work your way back through the basin to Hidden Lake and then up a series of tough switchbacks to Duck Creek Pass and vehicle.

Although Edith and Baldy are rock and talus, the basin is heavily timbered. Most lakes have suitable campsites. However, some lakes don't have trails to them. You'll want to spend at least one night in the basin before heading home.

The loop is twenty to twenty-five miles, depending on how many lakes you visit. About a third of the trip is cross-country. The shorter hike into Hidden Lake and out is only eight miles round-trip.

Although the ridge is devoid of water, the basin has plenty. This area accumulates a surprising amount of snow, so wait until at least late June—August if you want to escape the mosquitoes.

Many of the lakes have good fishing for cutthroat or rainbows. Only one, Hidden Lake, seriously shows the hand of man, as motorcyclists have severely scarred the terrain around the lake and heavy use is obvious.

This 20,000-acre roadless area is currently part of the Forest Service wilderness proposal.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 90 *SACAJAWEA PEAK*

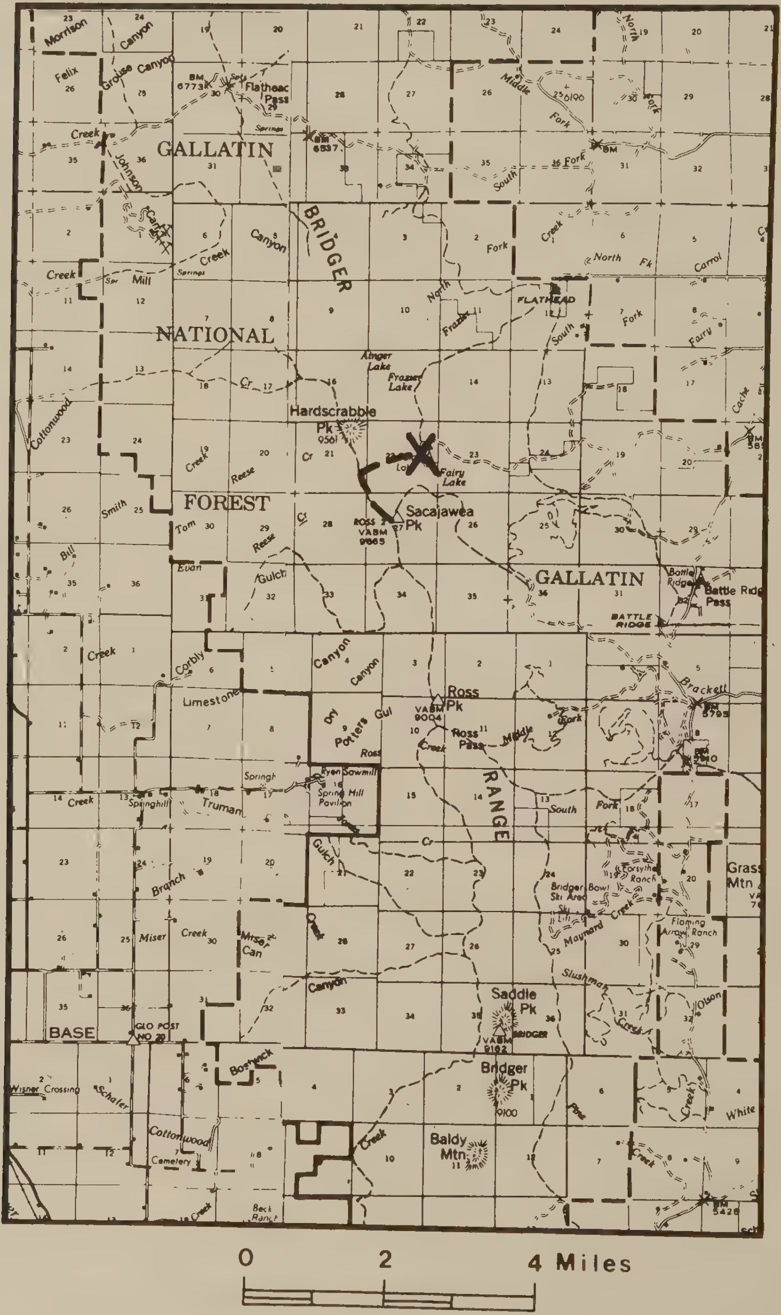
General description: A 2-mile hike to the top of the highest peak in the Bridger Range. For beginners who are almost ready to go on to bigger and better things.
General location: 15 miles north of Bozeman.
Maps: Sacajawea Peak USGS Quad and Gallatin National Forest Map.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,000 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Bozeman Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, 601 Nikles Ave., Bozeman, MT 59715, or call (406) 587-6920.

The hike: Hundreds of Bozeman-area residents have climbed Sacajawea Peak. Here's your chance to find out why. Pack the car with a picnic lunch. Bring water, as none is available on the hike. Take the kids and the dog. Drive a little more than twenty miles up the Bridger Creek Road, going past the Bridger Bowl Ski Area. About two miles past Battle Ridge Campground, turn off to the west (left) and take the road to the Fairy Lake Campground, about seven more miles. This road is passable by car, but leave your trailer at home. Park at Fairy Lake.

Note the massive furrowed limestone on the east face of Sacajawea Peak just above the lake. Find the trailhead and head up the two-mile, 2,000-foot climb to the summit. The trail will take you up to the saddle between Sacajawea Peak and Hardscrabble Peak, where you take the trail to the south (left) and follow its twists and turns up to the top. On a clear day, you can see half the hiking areas this book describes.

On a nice weekend in the summer, you will most certainly encounter other hikers on the trail and at the summit. This won't be the time and place for wilderness isolation and introspection, but rather a place to meet friends and neighbors who just thought they'd take a couple hours to work up a sweat and remind themselves how swell Montana is.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 90 *SACAJAWEA PEAK*


GALLATIN
NATIONAL
FOREST
BRIDGER
RANGE
GALLATIN
Hardscrabble Pk 9561
Sacajawea Pk
ROSS VABM 9665
Fairy Lake
Frazier Lake
Ainger Lake
Flathead Pass
Ross Pk VABM 9004
Ross Pass
Saddle Pk VABM 9162
Bridger Pk 9100
Baldy Mtn
Battle Ridge Pass
BATTLE RIDGE
FLATHEAD
Bridger Bowl Ski Area
Forsythe Ranch
Flaming Arrow Ranch
Grass Mtn
Spring Hill Pavilion
Ryen Sawmill
GLO POST NO 20
BASE
Wisner Crossing
Cemetery
Beck Ranch
Brackett
Slushman
Maynard Creek
Limestone
Corbly
Truman
Springhill
Cottonwood
Schafer
Bostwick
Miser Creek
Miser Can
Potters Gul
Reese Creek
Tom Evan Gulch
Smith
Bill
Johnson
Grosse Canyon
Morrison Canyon
Felix
Mill Creek
North Fork
Middle Fork
South Fork
Carrol
Cache
Olson
White
Pine
Canyon
0 2 4 Miles

Madison-Gallatin Ranges

Overview

This vast mountainous region includes the popular and breathtaking "Spanish Peaks" and the "Hyalite Peaks" in the Madison and Gallatin ranges south and east of Bozeman. The area is important for the continuity of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Tributary streams from the Madison Range feed the famed Madison river. Cutthroat trout live and spawn in the tributaries of this rugged roadless area. An occasional grizzly from Yellowstone ventures into these mountains to forage. The Madison Range like most all mountain ranges in Montana provide excellent elk habitat. Bighorn sheep also winter on the windswept open slopes.

The Gallatin range supports Englemann spruce, subalpine fir, whitebark pine, and lodgepole pine. Similar to the Madison, the range forms habitat for most of Montana's large mammals. Hikers can visit the extraordinary Hyalite Peaks. The mineral "hyalite" laces many of the ridgelines above forested valleys. The Gallatin Range can provide anything from pleasant stream-side walks to backpacking or mountain climbing trips of expedition proportions.

HIKE 91 *BEAR TRAP CANYON*

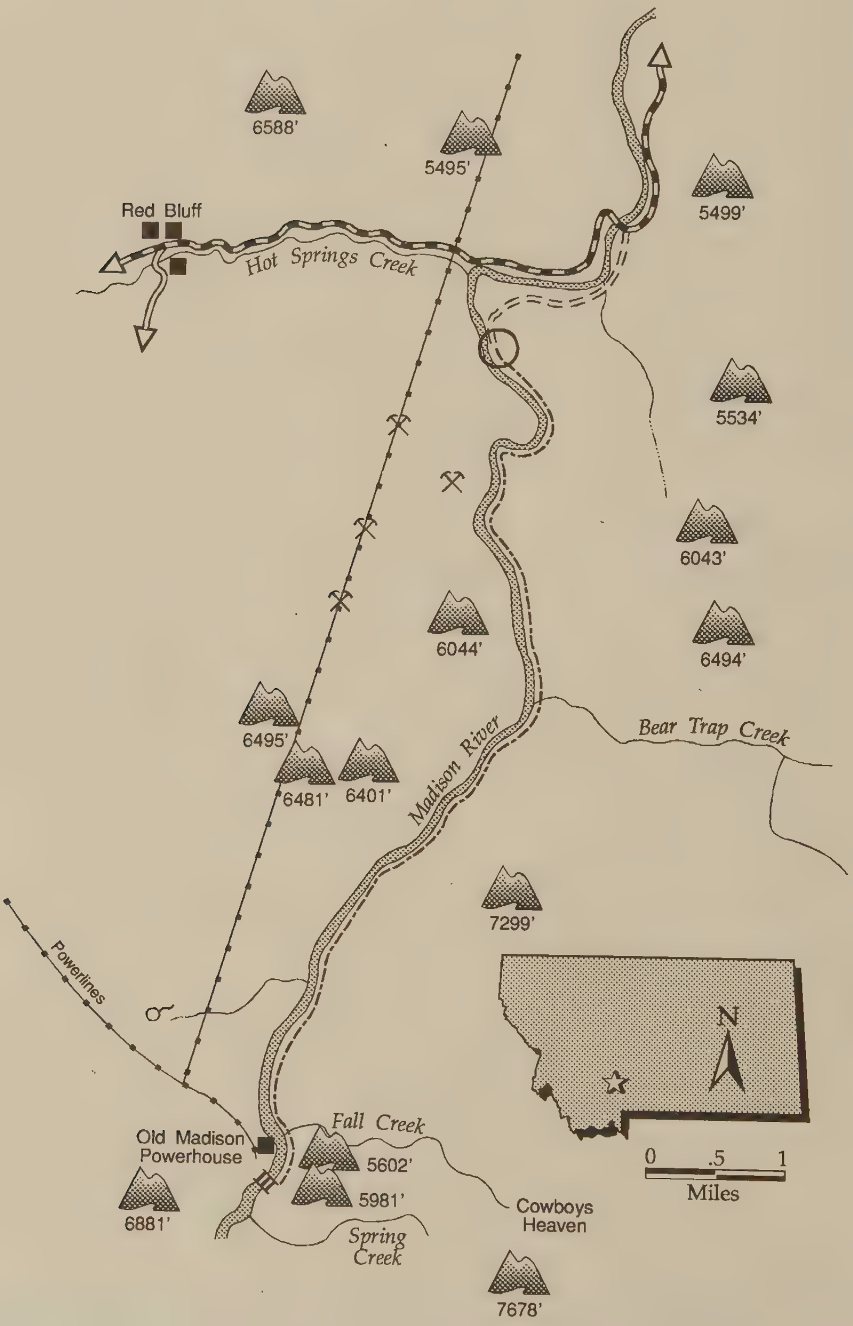
General description: A long but easy hike along a trout-filled river.
General location: 30 miles west of Bozeman along the Madison River.
Maps: Norris USGS Quad and the Bureau of Land Management's Public Lands in Montana Map #33—Madison.
Special attraction: A rare hike with a primitive flair along a major river with nationally famous trout fishing.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 500 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write District Manager, Butte District, Bureau of Land Management, Box 3388, 106 N. Parkmont, Butte, MT 59702, or call (406) 494-5059.

The hike: If you're a trout fisherman, you've undoubtedly heard of the Madison River, one of the most highly acclaimed streams in the United States. However, you probably haven't heard of a special hiking trail developed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) along the Madison in rugged Bear Trap Canyon. If you fancy large trout, this is a seven-mile slice of heaven.

To find the trailhead, drive west from Bozeman on U.S. Highway 289 for about thirty miles. Immediately before you cross the Madison River, watch for a dirt road turning left from the highway and a sign for the Bear Trap Recreation Area.

After driving three miles on this dirt road, you come to a small parking lot and the boundary of the primitive area. The well-marked trail starts at the parking area.

HIKE 91 *BEAR TRAP CANYON*


6588'
5495'
5499'
Red Bluff
Hot Springs Creek
5534'
6043'
6044'
6494'
6495'
Bear Trap Creek
Madison River
6481'
6401'
7299'
Powerlines
N
0
.5
1
Miles
Fall Creek
Old Madison Powerhouse
5602'
5981'
6881'
Cowboys Heaven
Spring Creek
7678'

The trail winds along the river for seven miles, gaining a mere five hundred feet in elevation. In past years, you could leave a vehicle at Montana Power's Ennis Dam Power House at the end of the hike. For safety reasons, however, Montana Power has closed access to this area, making this a fourteen-mile round trip.

Since the trail follows the river, there's plenty of water, However, you might want to bring your own water, as the river water might not be suitable for drinking. Also bring plenty of insect repellent, as the mosquitoes can be bad, especially in early summer. Many hikers (especially families) choose to stay overnight to take advantage of the early morning and late evening fishing.

There are several campsites, the first at the point where Bear Trap Creek joins the river. Bring your backpack stove, as firewood can be scarce along the narrow canyon.

Also bring a garbage bag—not only for *your* trash, but to carry out junk left by thoughtless others. The trail and campsites receive fairly heavy use. With that much traffic, there's often a few who haven't gotten the word about packing out what they carry in.

The area is closed to motorized recreation, so the signs of civilization (except some litter at the campsites) are scarce. Since the canyon remains free of snow most of the year, you can take the hike anytime between April and November. The heaviest use occurs when the fishing is good, especially during the salmon fly hatch in mid-June to early July.

Even without a fishing rod, this hike is attractive. The trail wanders through a spectacular canyon with sheer rock cliffs and abundant wildlife. The latter includes rattlesnakes, so be alert, and don't forget your snake bite kit.

In 1981, Bear Trap became one of the first BLM areas in the state to be recommended for wilderness designation. Two years later, the area became the first BLM-managed wilderness area and is a unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness in the Madison Range. Bear Trap Canyon is connected to the Spanish Peaks by a strip of roadless Forest Service land called Cowboy Heaven. The altitudinal gradient from 4,500 feet along the Madison River to over 10,500 feet in the Spanish Peaks presents an unparalleled opportunity to preserve the wide variety of life zones found in Montana.

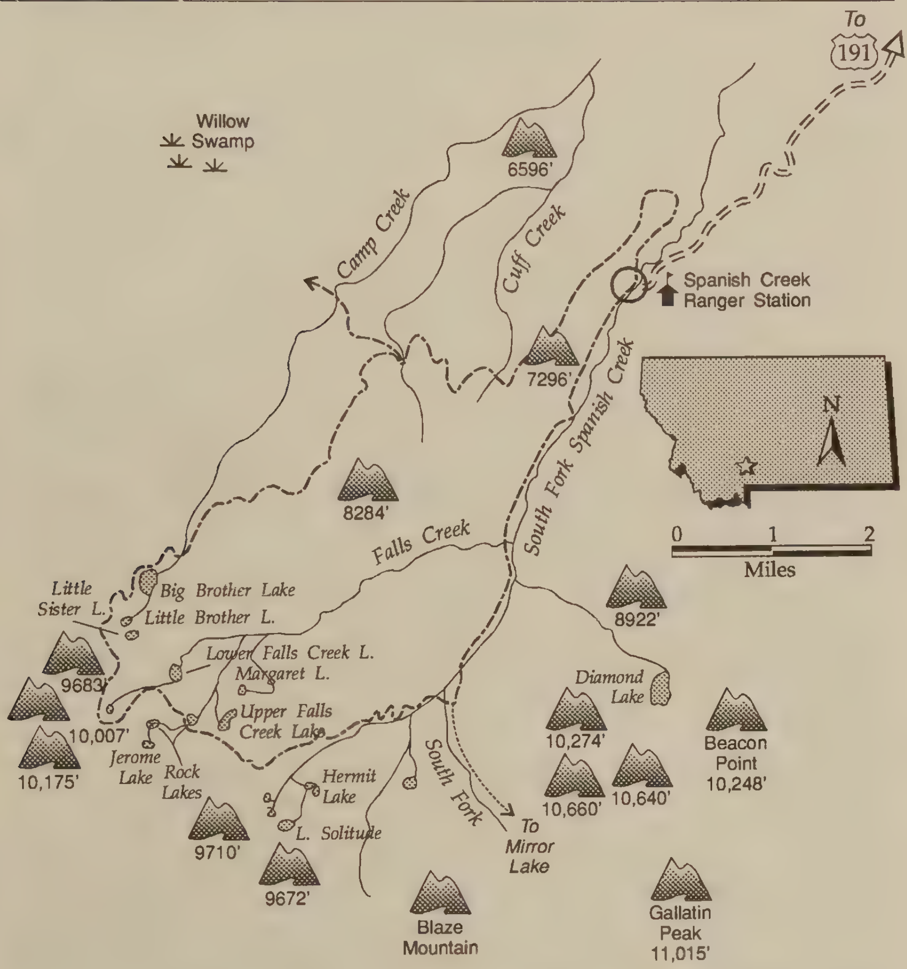
This is one of the best hiking trails on BLM land in Montana. Next time you run into somebody from that federal land-managing agency, suggest that Montana could use a few more such trails.—*Mike Comola*

HIKE 92 *SPANISH PEAKS*

General description: A long loop hike taking several days.
General location: 40 miles southwest of Bozeman on the western edge of the Spanish Peaks Primitive Area on the northern tip of the Madison Range.
Maps: Hidden Lakes, Gallatin Peak, Garnet Mountain, Beacon Point, Willow Swamp, Cherry Lake USGS Quads and the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Map from the Gallatin National Forest.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 3,200 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,200 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Bozeman Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, 601 Nikles, Bozeman, MT 59715, or call (406) 587-6920.

The moose, largest of the deer family and commonly observed from backcountry trails. Harry Engels photo.

HIKE 92 *SPANISH PEAKS*


To
191
Willow
Swamp
6596'
Camp Creek
Cuff Creek
Spanish Creek
Ranger Station
7296'
South Fork Spanish Creek
N
0
1
2
Miles
8284'
Falls Creek
8922'
Little
Sister L.
Big Brother Lake
Little Brother L.
9683'
Lower Falls Creek L.
Margaret L.
Diamond
Lake
10,007'
Upper Falls
Creek Lake
10,274'
Beacon
Point
10,248'
10,175'
Jerome
Lake
Rock
Lakes
Hermit
Lake
South Fork
10,640'
10,660'
To
Mirror
Lake
L. Solitude
9710'
9672'
Blaze
Mountain
Gallatin
Peak
11,015'

The hike: The Spanish Peaks rank among the most popular hiking areas in Montana. Although this hike traverses the fringe of the primitive area, it doesn't venture into the most heavily used portions. It does, however, provide the same incredible scenery that has made the Spanish Peaks Primitive Area nationally famous.

To find the trailhead, drive south from Bozeman on U.S. Highway 191. About ten miles south of Gallatin Gateway and just before entering the Gallatin Canyon, take a right (west) up Spanish Creek at a marked turnoff. After five miles, turn left (south) up the South Fork of Spanish Creek. Drive about eight miles along the South Fork until you reach a campground by the Spanish Creek Guard Station, where the trail begins.

This is a twenty-six-mile loop hike going up the South Fork and coming back to the same trailhead through the headwaters of Camp and Cuff creeks. Plan on at least three days to fully enjoy the scenery.

The hike starts with a gentle, eight-mile hike up the South Fork on Trail #407. Stay on the same trail as it leaves the South Fork and climbs to the west through a large group of small, subalpine lakes until you veer right onto Trail #446 down Camp Creek. You could shorten the hike by taking Trail #410 down Falls Creek, but you retrace your steps down the South Fork and miss some outstanding vistas.

The trail has more water than most, but take precautions to prevent *Giardiasis.* The trail is well-maintained and easy to follow throughout the trip with the minor exception of a few meadows toward the end of the hike.

You can camp at several excellent sites along the South Fork or, depending on how early you hit the trail, you might make it to the high lakes where the scenery popularizes the campsites. Camp at any of the lakes in this subalpine plateau. Most of them contain pan-sized cutthroat or rainbows. The South Fork offers good fishing for small brookies. Plan on using your stove to cook, as firewood is scarce.

This hike is loaded with side-trip possibilities—the Spanish Lakes, the upper reaches of Falls Creek, several excellent climbs to scenic summits, to name a few. You might decide to spend an extra day to get acquainted with this land of rock and thunder.

This area is within the Spanish Peaks unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, so special regulations apply. For example, camping is prohibited within two hundred feet of a lake shore and mountain bikes are prohibited altogether.—*Art Foran*

HIKE 93 *THE HELMET*

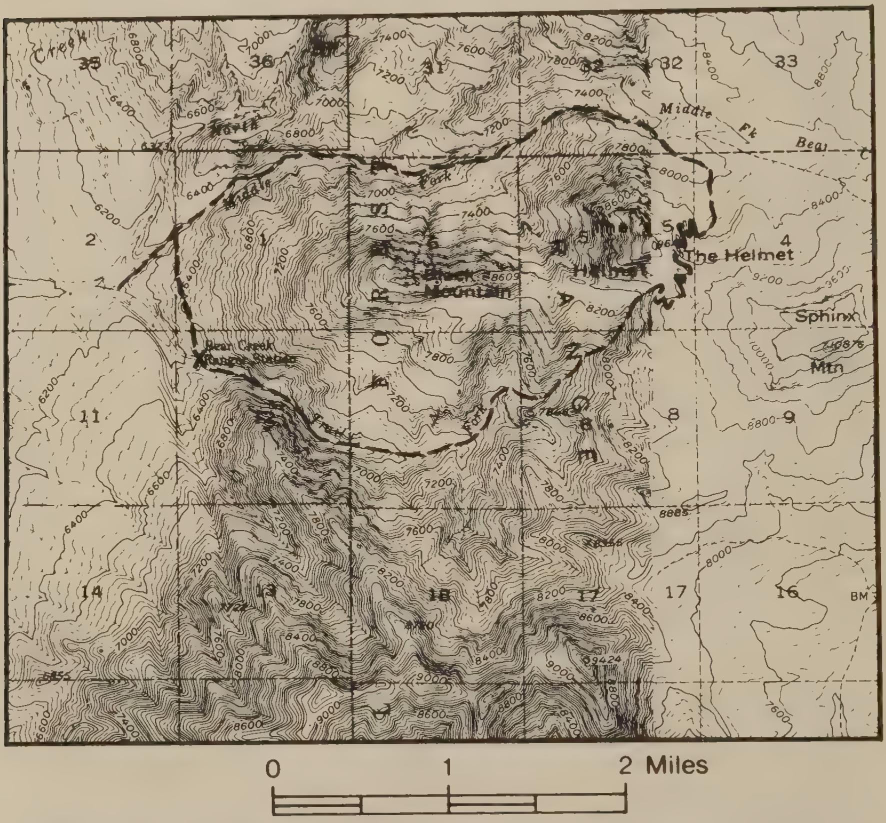
General description: A long day hike or moderate overnighter including a healthy climb.
General location: 18 miles southeast of Ennis in the Madison Range.
Maps: Cameron and Sphinx Mountain USGS Quad, and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Special attractions: The Sphinx and the Helmet, truly unique geological formations.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,180 feet.
Elevation loss: 3,180 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Madison Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, 5 Forest Service Road, Ennis, MT 59729, or call (406) 682-4253.

The hike: The Madison Range undoubtedly offers some of Montana's finest hiking. Yet only the northern section, the Spanish Peaks and the Hilgard Basin to the south, has ever become popular with hikers. The area south of the Spanish Peaks all the way to the Hilgard Basin on the southern tip of the range offers as much or more. The loop trail between the Sphinx and the Helmet nicely illustrates this fact.

The trail starts at Bear Creek Ranger Station, which can be found by turning

Climbing toward the saddle separating the Helmet and, in the background, the Sphinx. Bill Schneider photo.

east off U.S. Highway 287 at Cameron, driving three miles, and turning right (south). Continue south on a good gravel road for 1.5 miles until it turns left (east) and goes another mile to the Bear Creek Ranch. Turn south here again and travel less than a mile before angling off to the southeast along Bear Creek



to the Bear Creek Ranger Station. Park your car here.

Trail #326 enters the Lee Metcalf Wilderness just beyond the Bear Creek Ranger Station and then follows the Trail Fork of Bear Creek to the northeast for about two miles before it joins Trail #325. Trail #326 (not shown on the topo maps) heads east to Manley Camp; you take #325 to the saddle between the Helmet and the Sphinx, which is another three miles. During this portion of the hike, you'll experience most of the 2,300-foot elevation gain.

From this saddle, you have two logical side trips—climbs to the summits of the Helmet and the Sphinx, which, incidentally, do resemble a helmet and a sphinx. Scaling the Helmet takes less than two hours and the Sphinx slightly more. They're both easy, nontechnical scrambles and well worth the effort.

The Sphinx has the edge on vistas, with much of the Madison Range visible from the 10,876-foot summit—including the Yellow Mules country to the northeast (which still has grizzly bears); and Koch Peak, Shedhorn Ridge, No Man Ridge, and the Taylor Peaks to the south. At the summit, stay clear of the edge lest you fall over an incredibly steep cliff into the Indian Creek Valley.

After the climbs are behind you and you're back in the saddle, continue down the north side on Trail #325 into the Middle Fork of Bear Creek. From a "T" junction with Trail #346, Trail #325 continues down the drainage 3.5 miles to a bridge crossing the creek. From the bridge, the trail leads you south through mostly open country and directly back to the Bear Creek Ranger Station.

It's about five miles out to the road, making this a tough, ten-mile hike, not including the mountain climbs. The Middle Fork and a smaller stream on the climb are the only reliable water sources, so plan on carrying water with you.

If you're camping, pick one of several good sites along the Middle Fork. There's plenty of firewood, and you can spend some time after supper trying to spot a member of the area's large moose population.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 94 *LIZARD LAKES*

General description: An easy hike for strollers who appreciate gentle, alpine scenery.
General location: 45 miles south of Bozeman; 12 miles south of Big Sky Resort.
Maps: Sphinx Mountain USGS Quad and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Special attractions: Alpine forests, meadows, and lakes.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 1,875 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Box 520, West Yellowstone, MT 59758, or call (406) 646-7369.

The hike: Because of volcanic activity long ago, there's a special scenic quality about the Madison and Gallatin ranges. Strangely shaped buttes and fortresses rest atop plateaus of timber and meadows. Small lakes are tucked away in unexpected places. Every turn in the trail brings a fresh surprise.

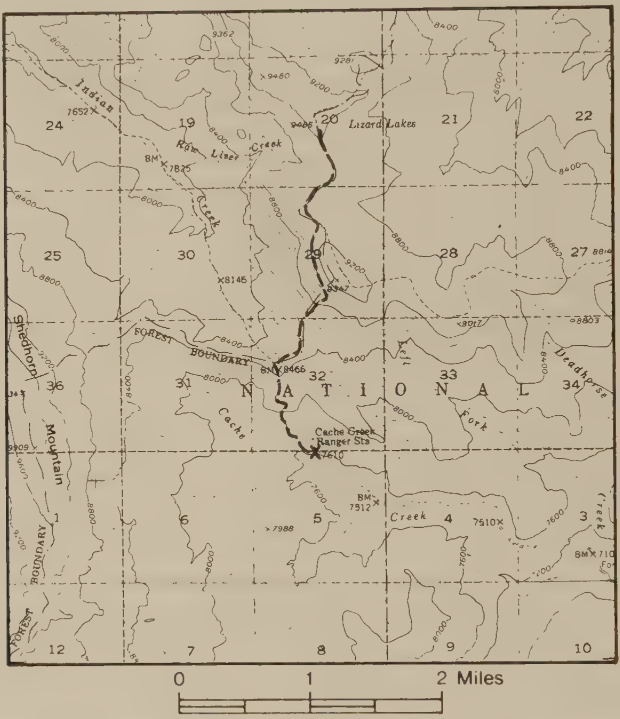
To find the trailhead, take U.S. Highway 191 south from Bozeman. About sixteen miles past Big Sky, look for the Taylor Fork Road heading west. About eight miles up this road, take the fork to the right (Cache Creek Road) and follow it about three miles to the trailhead (Trail #173).

Go north on this trail for one mile to the Taylor Fork/Indian Creek Divide, an uphill walk (about 1,000 feet of elevation gain) through aspen thickets and open meadows interspersed with sagebrush and wildflowers. The pass is at 8,500 feet. The large mountain off to the northwest is Sphinx Mountain. From this location it actually looks like a sphinx.

From this pass, the trail follows the east ridge, wandering through mosaics of timber and open grass. Stay on this ridge as it turns north. About three miles from the pass, the trail favors the east side of the ridge as it angles down to Lizard Lakes.

One lake is near the trail. Another is half a mile downstream from the outlet. Sometimes the higher lake is dry, producing interesting contours of color from the aquatic vegetation. The lower lake offers fair fishing for pan-sized cutthroat.

HIKE 94 *LIZARD LAKES*


Indian
Raw Liver Creek
Creek
Lizard Lakes
FOREST BOUNDARY
N A T I O N A L
Shedhorn
Mountain
Cache
Cache Creek Ranger Sta
Left
Fork
Deadhorse
Creek
FOREST BOUNDARY
24
19
20
21
22
25
30
29
28
27
36
31
32
33
34
1
6
5
4
3
12
7
8
9
10
7652
BM 7825
×8145
×9480
9362
9281
9466
BM 9466
9347
×8917
8803
8814
7610
BM 7912
7510
×7988
BM 710
9309
8000
8400
8800
9200
7600
0
1
2 Miles

Altogether, it's about a nine-mile round-trip. Wait until July for the snows to leave. Bring drinking water; it's dry all the way to Lizard Lakes.—*Pat Caffrey*

HIKE 95 *HILGARD BASIN*

General description: A moderate backpack into a lake-filled, high-altitude basin.
General location: 40 miles south of Ennis and 22 miles northwest of West Yellowstone on the southern end of the Madison Range.
Maps: Hebgen Dam USGS Quad and the Gallatin (south half) and Beaverhead (east half) National Forests Travel Plan Maps.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 2,720 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Box 520, West Yellowstone, MT 59758, or call (406) 646-7369.

Expedition Lake in the Hilgard Basin, Echo Peak in the background. Mike Sample photo.

The hike: Of all the Madison Range's natural wonders—the Spanish Peaks, the Sphinx/Helmet complex, Taylor Peaks, and all the rest—the Hilgard Basin might top the list for hiking enjoyment.

To find the trailhead, turn north onto the Beaver Creek Road off U.S. Highway 287 two miles west of Hebgen Reservoir or twenty-eight miles south of Ennis along Quake Lake. Follow the Beaver Creek Road for about six miles until it ends at Polomageton Park, where the trail begins. Two trails start from this trailhead; take Trail 202, "Sentinel Trail."

The trail gradually climbs along Sentinel Creek at first. Then the incline steepens as the trail and creek get closer to Expedition Pass, for a total elevation gain of 2,720 feet. It's seven miles to the basin, all on a well-worn trail.

One mile before the Sentinel Creek Trail reaches Expedition Pass, the Hilgard Basin Trail will turn to the south. At a high saddle, the splendor of the Hilgard Basin unfolds before you, with Expedition Lake and several others in the foreground and Echo Peak creating a perfect backdrop.

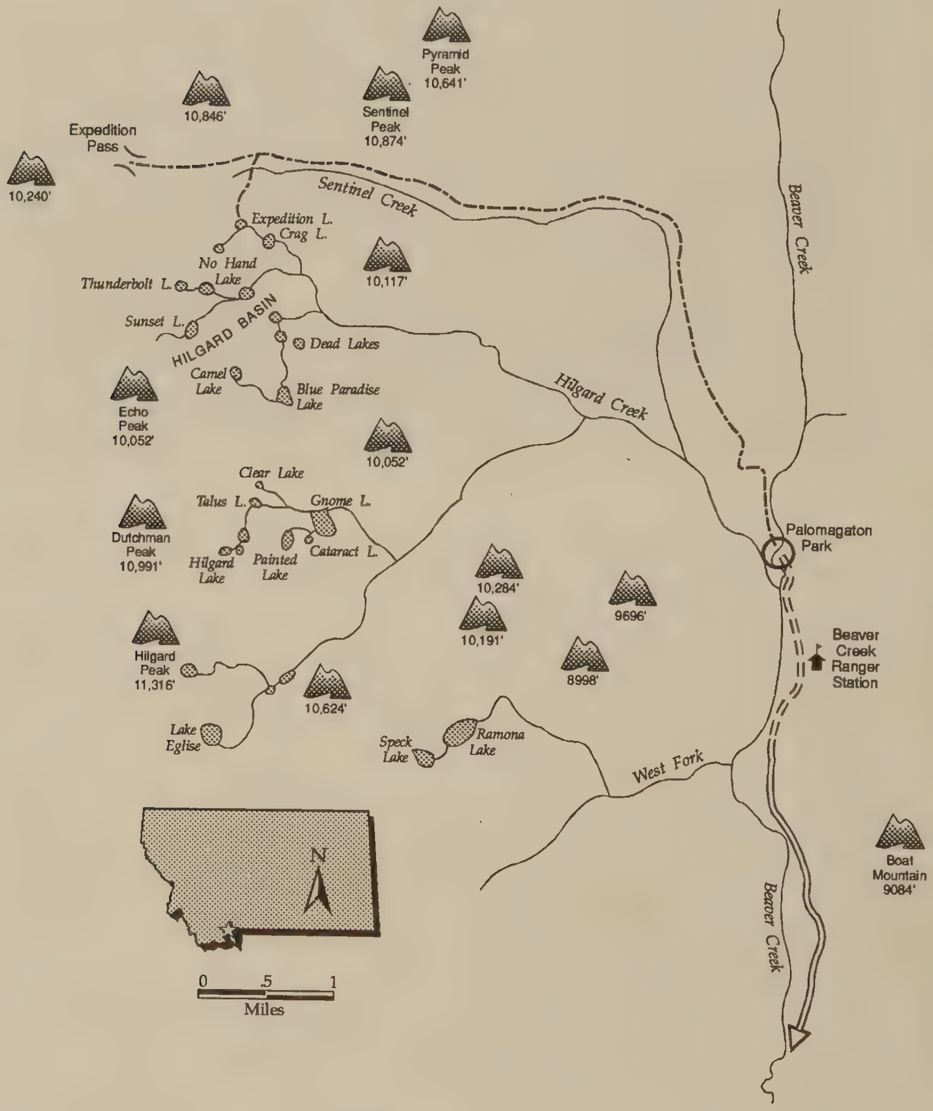
Spend a few minutes taking in the views, and then drop into the basin and pick one of many campsites along Expedition, Sunset, Ha Hand, Blue Paradise, Crag, or one of the other lakes.

This is high country with only a limited supply of wood. So plan on using your backpack stove, leaving the area's scarce wood supply to add to the aesthetics.

Most of the lakes used to support trout populations, but the harsh winters have frozen out many of the fish. And none of the lakes have been restocked. In 1982, only Expedition, Crag, and Blue Paradise lakes seemed to be any good for fishing.

It would be your big loss to head back the next day without spending at

HIKE 95 *HILGARD BASIN*


Pyramid Peak 10,641'
10,846'
Sentinel Peak 10,874'
Expedition Pass
10,240'
Sentinel Creek
Beaver Creek
Expedition L.
Crag L.
No Hand Lake
Thunderbolt L.
10,117'
Sunset L.
HILGARD BASIN
Dead Lakes
Camel Lake
Blue Paradise Lake
Echo Peak 10,052'
Hilgard Creek
10,052'
Clear Lake
Talus L.
Gnome L.
Dutchman Peak 10,991'
Hilgard Lake
Painted Lake
Cataract L.
Palomagaton Park
10,284'
9696'
10,191'
Hilgard Peak 11,316'
Beaver Creek Ranger Station
8998'
10,624'
Lake Eglise
Speck Lake
Ramona Lake
West Fork
N
Boat Mountain 9084'
Beaver Creek
0 .5 1
Miles

least one day exploring and fishing in the basin. For climbers, the basin acts as a base for several climbs, with 11,214-foot Echo Peak being the most popular and 11,316-foot Hilgard Peak—the highest point in the Madison Range—being the most technical.

Although in recent years Hilgard Basin has become increasingly popular, camping is not allowed two hundred feet of the trail. Hilgard Basin is among the most fragile of hiking areas, so take every precaution not to leave marks of your visit.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 96 COFFIN LAKE

General description: A 5-mile hike up to a high mountain lake in a little-used area.
General location: 12 miles west of West Yellowstone, Montana.
Maps: Hebgen Dam and Targhee Pass USGS Quads, and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attraction: High alpine country along the Continental Divide.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Box 520, West Yellowstone, MT 59758, or call (406) 646-7369.

The hike: Contrary to popular belief, the Madison Range does not end with the Taylor-Hilgards but continues south across Quake Lake into the little-visited Lionhead Mountains. Familiar only to a few locals, the Lionheads feature several high mountain lakes surrounded by 10,000-foot peaks.

Drive west from West Yellowstone on U.S. Highway 20/191, which leads to Cherry Creek, Rumbaugh, and Spring Creek campgrounds on Hebgen Lake. After going past these three campgrounds, about 9.5 miles from the highway, you'll reach the Watkins Creek trailhead.

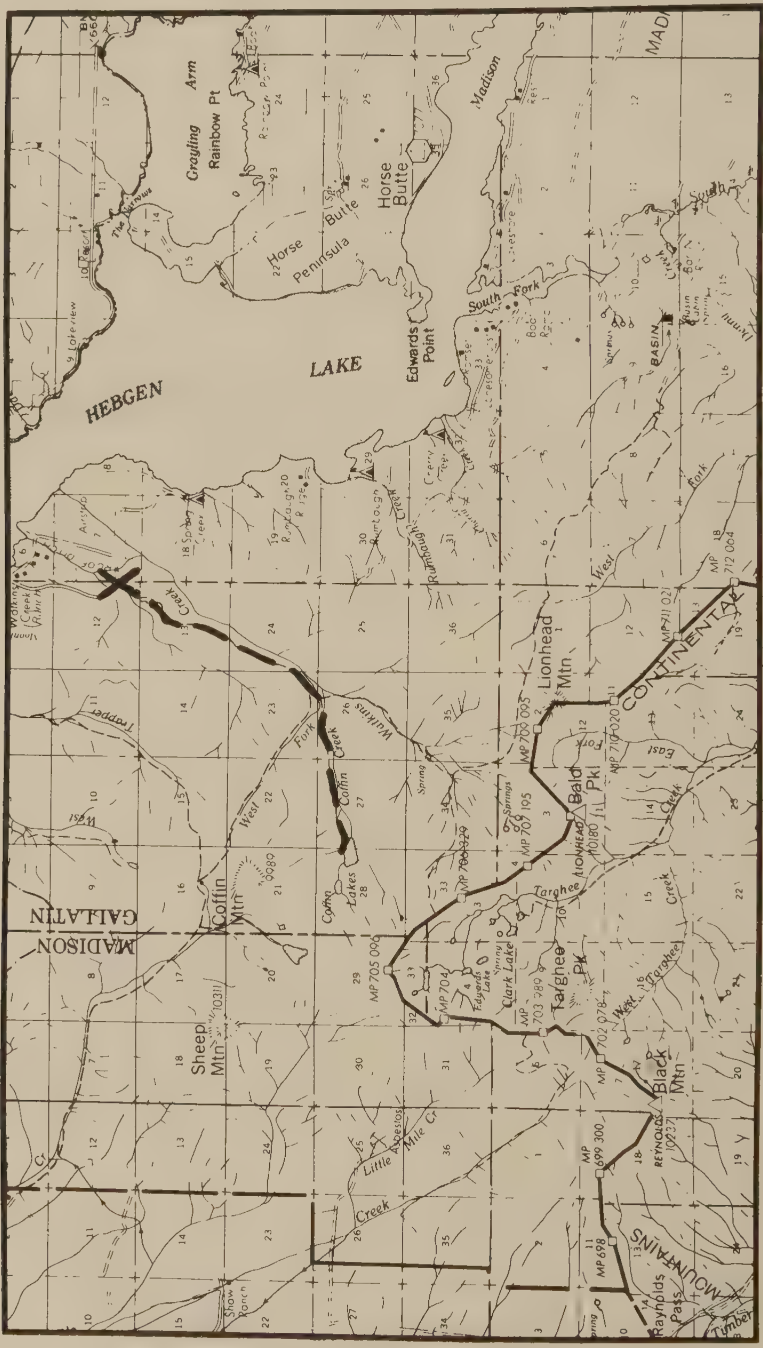
Trail #209 will take off to the right up Coffin Creek. Two more miles will bring you to Coffin Lake.

Coffin Lake serves as a good base camp to explore the surrounding area or a nice place just to sit and fish for the lake's elusive cutthroat trout. You can wander over to Upper Coffin Lake and scramble to the flat-topped summit of Coffin Mountain to the north. Here views of the rest of the Madison Range and the vast expanse of Yellowstone Park are stunning. A herd of bighorn sheep also makes its home in the area, and the animals seem to have little fear of hikers.

By climbing out of the lake basin toward the south, you can gain the Continental Divide and gaze down at the many lakes in the headwaters of Targhee Creek in Idaho. One visitor to these lakes reported that he could find absolutely no signs of previous use by hikers, not even the omnipresent fire rings of old hunters' camps.

The Coffin Lakes lie in the proposed Lionhead Wilderness Area, which was part of the vetoed 1988 Wilderness Bill.—*Ed Madej*

HIKE 96 *COFFIN LAKE*

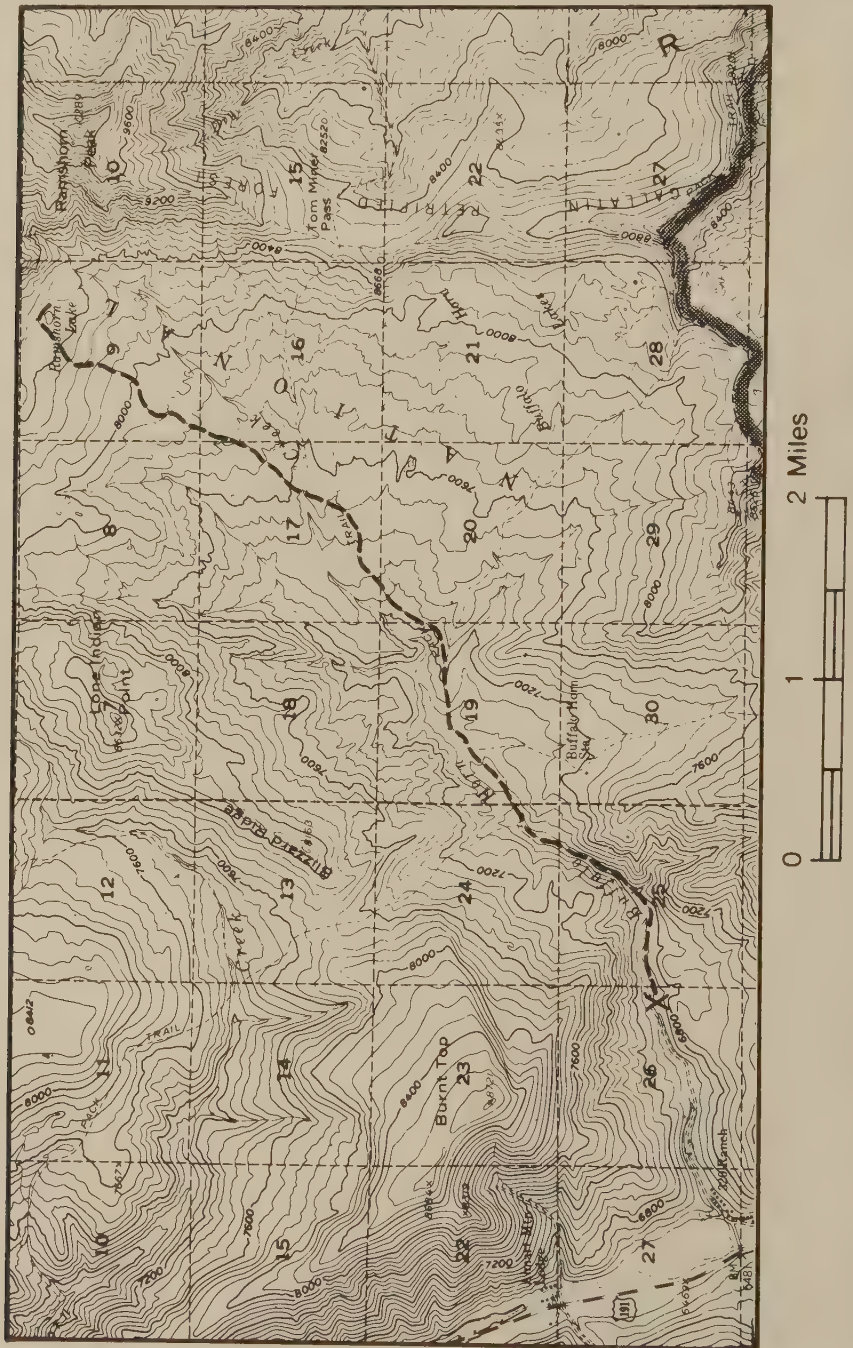

HEBGEN
LAKE
Grayling Arm
Rainbow Pt
Horse Butte
Horse Butte
Horse Peninsula
Madison
Edwards Point
South Fork
BASIN
West Fork
Rumbaugh Creek
Watkins Creek
Trapper
West Fork
Coffin Creek
Coffin Lakes
Coffin Mtn
9080
GALLATIN
MADISON
Sheep Mtn
10311
Lionhead Mtn
CONTINENTAL
East Fork
Bald Pk
LIONHEAD
10180
Targhee Creek
Targhee Pk
Clark Lake
Edwards Lake
Black Mtn
REYNOLDS
10237
Reynolds Pass
MOUNTAINS
Little Asbestos
Little Mile Cr
Creek
Show Ranch
MP 712 004
MP 711 021
MP 710 020
MP 709 095
MP 707 195
MP 706 229
MP 705 096
MP 704
MP 703 989
MP 702 078
MP 699 300
MP 698
Timber

HIKE 97 *RAMSHORN LAKE*

General description: A long day hike or easy overnighter.
General location: 45 miles south of Bozeman.
Maps: Sunshine Point, Lone Indian Peak, Ramshorn Peak USGS Quads and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Special attractions: Gentle backcountry and good fishing.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,600 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Bozeman Ranger District,

The majestic bighorn sheep, a rare sight along hiking trails. Harry Engels photo.

HIKE 97 *RAMSHORN LAKE*


Ramshorn Peak
Ramshorn Lake
Tom Miner Pass
Lone Indian Point
Buffalo Horn Sta
Buffalo Horn Creek
Buffalo Lakes
Burnt Top
Big Creek
320 Ranch
Almart Mtn Lodge
TRAIL
191
0
1
2 Miles

Gallatin National Forest, 601 Nikles, Bozeman, MT 59715, or call (406) 587-6920.

The hike: This area isn't scenic in the same sense as the Mission Mountains or Glacier National Park. It offers more of a gentle, quiet beauty—not rugged peaks carved by glaciers.

To find the trailhead, drive south through the Gallatin Canyon on U.S. Highway 191 about forty miles from where it crosses Interstate 90—or ten miles south of Big Sky. Watch for a sign to 320 Guest Ranch on the left (east) side of the highway. You can see the guest ranch from the road.

Follow this gravel road until it ends half a mile past the ranch. The trail to Ramshorn Lake starts where the road ends. Although the Forest Service is attempting to resolve the situation, the bridge across the Gallatin River is still privately owned. So thank somebody at the 320 Ranch for allowing access.

It's a gradual uphill climb for six miles to Ramshorn Lake—a fairly easy hike except, perhaps, the last mile where the trail gains elevation rapidly. The trail goes through heavy timber most of the way and crosses a few open parks, particularly around the four-mile mark where there is a series of big meadows.

The trail follows Buffalo Horn Creek most of the way. So drinking water is usually available.

Although the area doesn't seem to support many deer, elk are everywhere. Also watch for bighorn sheep, moose, and black bears. Since Ramshorn Lake lies just north of Yellowstone National Park, a few grizzly bears inhabit the area.

The lake has all sizes of cutthroat trout, including some over three pounds. But, as usual, they're hard to catch.

The best campsite is at the lower end of the lake near the outlet. There's plenty of firewood and good drinking water.

For rock climbers, 10,269-foot Ramshorn Peak (just east of the lake) offers an easy scramble.

For rockhounds, there are some extremely interesting geological formations about half a mile from the lake on the way to Ramshorn Pass, just north of Ramshorn Peak. Petrified wood can be found on Ramshorn Peak.

The trail brings hikers into the Porcupine-Buffalo Horn-Hyalite Wilderness Study Area. The fate of this area is being cast, so you might want to pass your ideas for future management on to the Forest Service.—*Bill Cunningham*

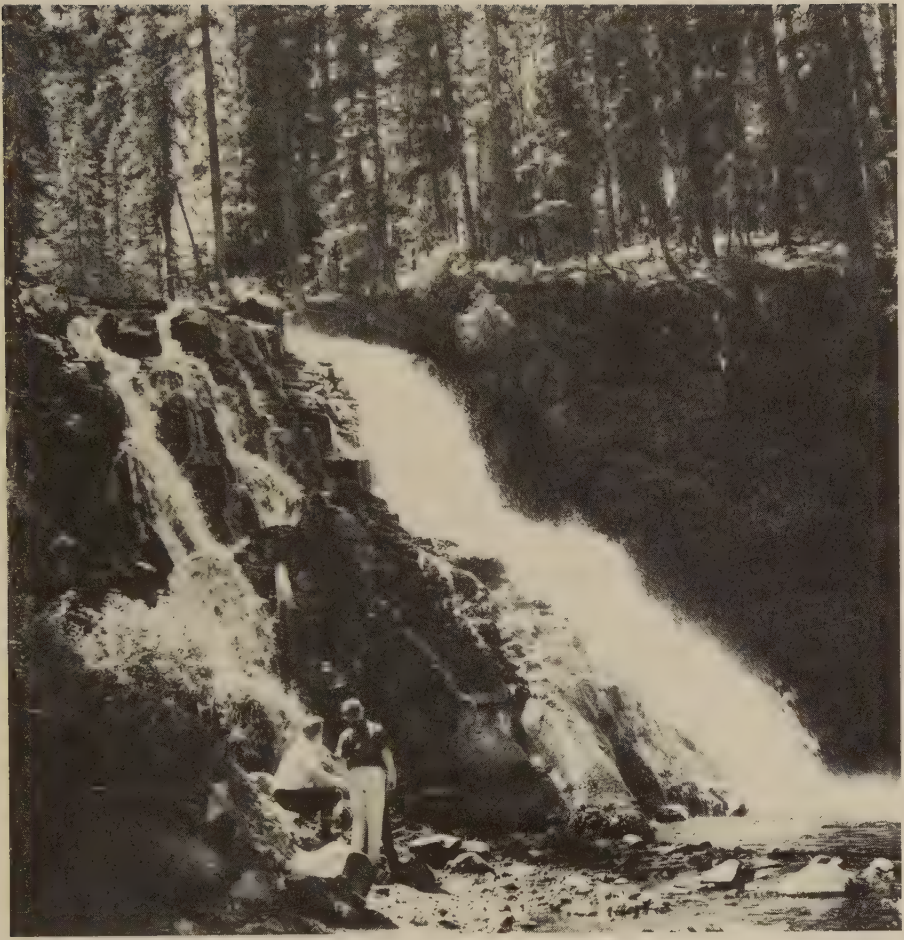
HIKE 98 *HYALITE LAKE*

General description: A long day hike or moderate overnighter to an alpine lake.
General location: 20 miles south of Bozeman.
Maps: Fridley Peak USGS Quad and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,900 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Bozeman Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, 601 Nikles, Bozeman, MT 59715, or call (406) 587-6920.

Hyalite Basin in the Gallatin Range. Mike Sample photo.

The hike: To find the trailhead, drive south from Bozeman on Montana Highway 243 (marked 345 on the Montana Highway Map) for about seven miles before turning left onto the road up Hyalite Canyon. This junction is marked with Forest Service signs. Drive about twelve miles to the Hyalite Reservoir, then turn left, and drive around the north side of the reservoir. When the road forks, turn right and go past Window Rock cabin to the end of the road.

While walking 5.5 miles south and 1,800 feet up this well-maintained trail, you pass eleven waterfalls cascading in a stairstep fashion out of a red-rocked mountain bowl. Although none of them are large waterfalls, each has its own unique character, as their names suggest: Grotto, Arch, Twin, Silken Skein, Champagne, Chasm, Shower, Devil's Slide, Apex, S'il Vous Plait, and Alpine. Each waterfall lures you onward to see the next cascade. The hike seems to



Grotto Falls on the way to Hyalite Lake in the Gallatin Range. Forest Service photo.

pass quickly, although you may pass four or five hours before climbing out of the timber into the wide bowl that holds Hyalite Lake.

This lake is justly popular with people in the Bozeman area, but as is so often the case the usage occurs mostly at the lower end by day hikers who come for a short walk to see a couple of the waterfalls. By the time you reach the lake, you may have the surrounding country to yourself.

Do not count on trout for dinner; the lake is too shallow to stay liquid in some winters. Instead, enjoy the spectacular vistas, which include Fridley Peak to the southeast and Hyalite Peak just to the southwest. A large meadow stretches around the lake and expands out to the base of Fridley Peak. Possible campsites are numerous; the only problem is deciding which view you favor the most.

Birds seem to like the basin. On the edges of the timber, Clark's nutcrackers and grey jays flash their black and white patterns; Stellar jays catch the eye with their irridescent blue crests. And out in the meadows hover hummingbirds, attracted by the profusion of wildflowers. Especially abundant are the paintbrush, lupine, fleaband, and four o'clocks.

In the evening you may hear or see a deer come down for a drink at the lakeshore. Spotting an occasional elk, mountain goat, or bear is a possibility. Most assuredly, a few marmots will whistle at you as you explore the bowl.

Winter releases its grip on the Hyalite Basin quite late by lowland standards. Snowbanks may not melt off the trail until late June, and winter may return quickly, making late September and October trips a gamble.

While at the lake, you should consider a couple of short but interesting side trips that begin at the outlet of the lake. One is an easy two-mile walk to the top of Hyalite Peak (10,299-feet) for views down into Horseshoe Basin and out into the Yellowstone River country. The other is a two-mile hike across a neighboring cirque and up a ridge to the Hyalite/Squaw Creek Divide. Both provide high vantage points from which to enjoy the beautiful Gallatin Range.—*Mike Sample*

(Because of their close proximity, the hikes to Hyalite, Emerald, and Heather lakes are on the same map.—Editor)

HIKE 99 *EMERALD AND HEATHER LAKES*

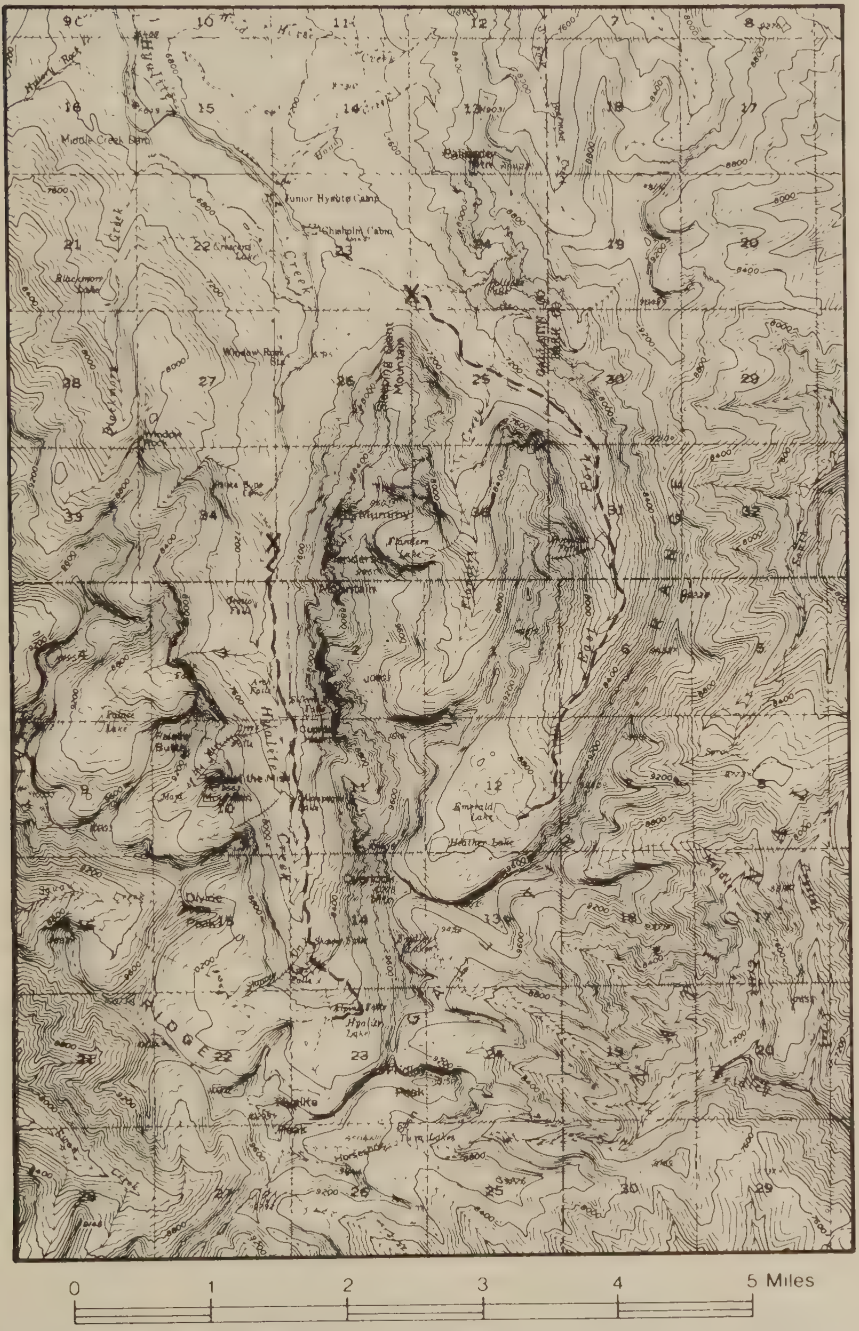
General description: A long day hike or moderate overnighter to two beautiful mountain lakes.
General location: 20 miles south of Bozeman.
Maps: Fridley Peak USGS Quad and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,000 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Bozeman Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, 601 Nikles, Bozeman, MT 59715, or call (406) 587-6920.

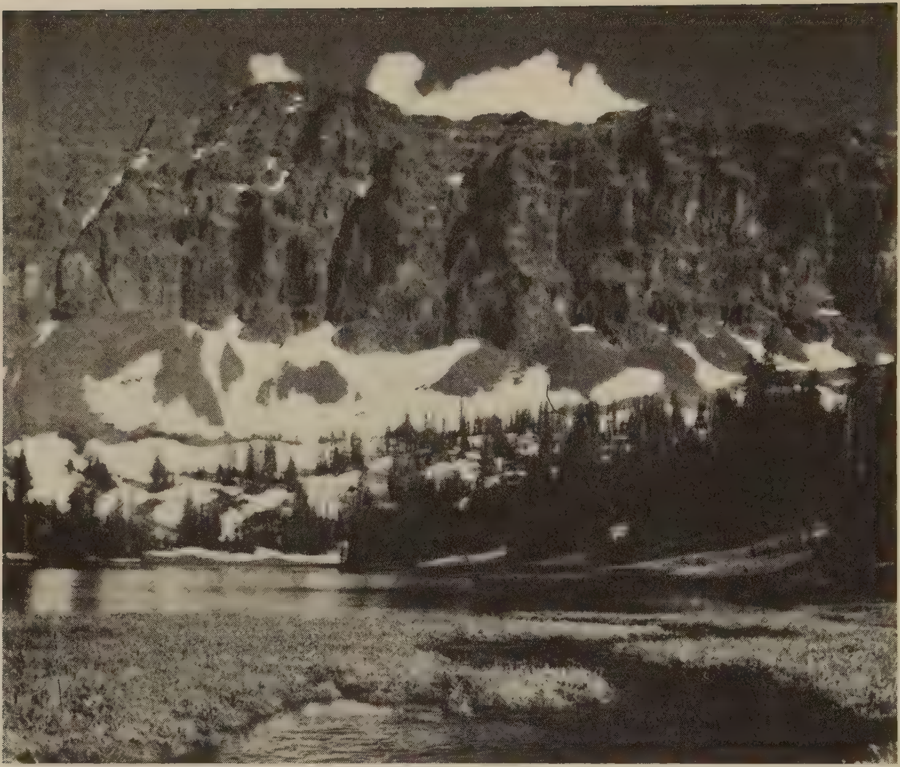
The hike: To find the trailhead, drive south from Bozeman on Montana Highway 243 (marked 345 on the Montana Highway Map) for about seven miles before turning left onto a gravel road to Hyalite Basin. This junction is marked with Forest Service signs. Drive twelve miles to the Hyalite Reservoir, then turn left, and drive around the north side of the reservoir. At a fork in the road, turn left onto the East Fork Road and continue past the turnout for the short hike to Palisade Falls until the road ends at the trailhead.

Although somewhat rocky in places, the trail is generally well-maintained. Over the 5.5-mile gradual uphill pull to Emerald Lake, you emerge from the thick forest to gain increasingly expansive views of the rugged cliffs to the east. These cliffs eventually pinch in and meet the mountainous ridge from the west to form the walls of the cirque that holds Emerald and Heather lakes and a few unnamed potholes.

Once at Emerald Lake, you have a wide choice of campsites in the meadows interspersed around the lake with sparse stands of subalpine timber. A rough trail departs from the west side of Emerald and travels less than half a mile and up 250 feet in elevation to Heather Lake. From the trailhead to

HIKE 98 & 99 *HYALITE, EMERALD, & HEATHER LAKES*


Middle Creek Dam
Hyalite Creek
Junior Hyalite Camp
Chisholm Cabin
Emerald Lake
Blackmore Lake
Window Rock
Flanders Lake
Palace Lake
Palace Butte
Emerald Lake
Heather Lake
Divide Peak
Hyalite Lake
Hyalite Peak
Twin Lakes
East Fork
0
1
2
3
4
5 Miles



Emerald Basin in the Gallatin Range. Mike Sample photo.

Heather Lake, the trail climbs a total of about 2,000 feet, yet there aren't any prohibitively steep pitches.

Heather Lake does not have as many potential campsites as does Emerald. The wall of the cirque falls sharply down to the shore of Heather on the west side, while rock shelves and snowbanks protrude on the other shores. Both lakes offer fair fishing for pan-sized trout.

The eleven-mile round-trip should require only about five hours of hiking—not including time spent relishing the beauty of these high-altitude lakes. The hike may be too much for small children.

The trail follows the East Fork of Hyalite Creek most of the way, so drinking water is readily available. Wait until July to try this hike, however, as the area remains clogged with snow through June.

About 1.5 miles from the trailhead, the East Fork tumbles over Horsetail Falls—a sight well worth seeing. The falls are plainly visible from the trail; the sound of falling water will be a tonic for anyone who has stayed out on the plains too long.

Perhaps the highlight of the trip is the incredible display of wildflowers. Color is everywhere, rivaling even Glacier National Park's natural flower beds. You'll find glacier lilies, columbine, lupine, paintbrush, alpine forget-me-nots, shooting stars, and many more.

These lakes are just north of Yellowstone National Park, but the chance of stumbling into a grizzly bear is remote. Nonetheless, take the standard precautions. The chances of seeing deer, black bears, elk, or mountain goats are good.

Although the trail receives above average use, most hikers apparently have taken care not to leave signs of their passing. But please pay special attention to wilderness camping manners, as this is fragile, beautiful, alpine country.—*Mike Sample*

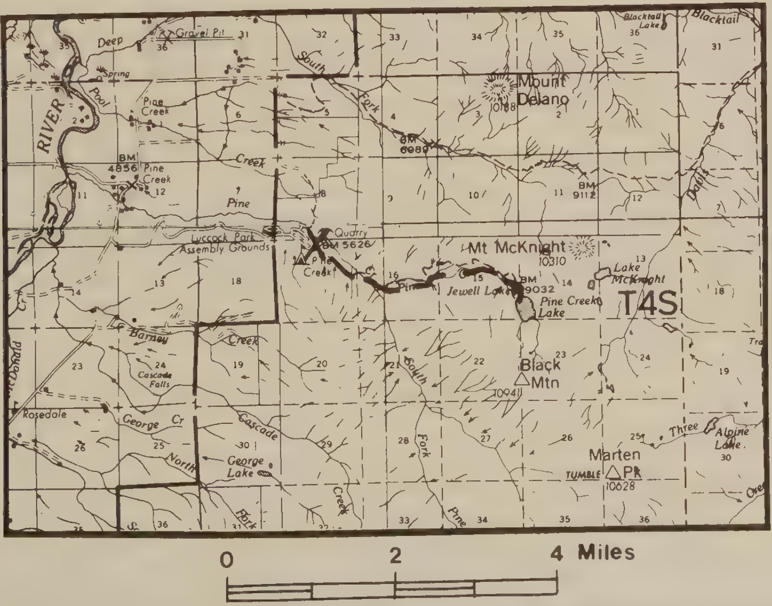
(Because of their close proximity, the hikes to Hyalite and to Emerald and Heather lakes are on the same map.—Editor)

HIKE 100 *PINE CREEK LAKE*

General description: A steep 5-mile climb up the east side of Paradise Valley to a beautiful mountain lake.
General location: 15 miles south of Livingston.
Maps: Emigrant and Mount Cowen USGS Quads, and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,407 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Livingston Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Route 62, Box 3197, Livingston, MT 59047, or call (406) 222-1892.

The hike: To begin this hike, drive south of Livingston on U.S. Highway 89 for five miles. Then turn east (left) onto the old highway at the sign reading

HIKE 100 *PINE CREEK LAKE*


Deep
Gravel Pit
Spring
Pool
RIVER
Pine Creek
BM 4856
Pine Creek
Creek
Pine
South Fork
BM 6989
Mount Delano
10168
Blacktail Lake
Blacktail
BM 9112
Quarry
BM 5626
Pine Creek
Luccock Park Assembly Grounds
Mt McKnight
10310
Jewell Lake
BM 9032
Lake McKnight
Pine Creek Lake
T4S
Barney Creek
Creek
Cascade Falls
Rosedale
George Cr
Cascade
North Fork
George Lake
South Fork
Pine Creek
Black Mtn
10941
Tumble
Marten Pk
10628
Three
Alpine Lake
0
2
4 Miles

"East River Road" and go about eight more miles. About 0.7 mile past the cabin community of Pine Creek, turn east (left) onto a paved road marked with Forest Service signs. Go to the end of this road, where there is a Forest Service campground and the trailhead for this hike.

In the summer of 1981, volunteers from the American Hiking Society improved and maintained this trail, the first mile of which is deceptively flat. At the end of the flat stretch, you stand at the foot of beautiful Pine Creek Falls. This is far enough for some of you who have heard about the next four miles. In those four miles, the trail climbs more than 3,000 feet. But for others, the allure of a mountain lake held in a glacial cirque is too much to resist. The trail is usually dry, so draw some water at the falls. But be sure to treat it. Water from anywhere in the Pine Creek area is not recommended for untreated drinking due to the threat of *Giardiasis.*

Because the trail climbs 1,000 feet per mile, most people take between three and four hours to reach the lake. On the bright side, coming out takes only two. Therefore, this could be a day hike. But there is a good campsite near the lake's outlet and good fishing for pan-sized cutthroat to keep you occupied should you choose to stay overnight. Plan on using your stove, as firewood is scarce.

The lake lies beneath 10,941-foot Black Mountain in an obvious glacial cirque. On the north side of the lake, the bedrock shows pronounced striations where the glacier shoved its rocky load across the granite. At the outlet, a broad slab impounds the lake.

The best time to visit Pine Creek Lake is between July 15 and September 30. Any earlier will mean wading through snowdrifts on the last part of the trail; in October, those drifts may reappear quickly. If you prize solitude, wait until after Labor Day. Before school starts, the trail is heavily used by youth camps.

Overly friendly ground squirrels, marmots, pikas, and a few mountain goats are common around the lake.

If you have extra time, hike around to the east end of the lake and climb the divide to look into Lake McKnight and the Davis Creek drainage. There is no trail into McKnight Lake, and the country is so rough and remote that few hikers ever walk its shores.

One of the pleasures of camping at Pine Creek Lake is the possibility of seeing alpenglow on the peaks. As the sun moves lower in the west and begins to set behind the Gallatin Range, the atmosphere deflects a portion of the color in the spectrum, leaving a pronounced reddish hue to the last few moments of sunlight. When the conditions are right and this red light bounces off the polished rock surfaces just north of the outlet, the effect is startling. With only a little poetic license, one could say it looks like the peaks are on fire.—*Mike Sample*

Island Range

Overview

Grain fields and grasslands end abruptly in massive, mountainous arches, like whales rising from a sea of prairie. Island Ranges east of the Big Belts include the Little Belt, Highwood, Bear Paw, Big Snowies, Castle, and Crazy Mountains. Of these, the Crazy Mountains are probably the most popular. The Crazy Mountains include fifty-six mountain lakes and thirty-four peaks. For centuries, the Crow Tribe has traveled to the high peaks of the Crazies for spiritual guidance.

The Middle Fork of the Judith River wilderness study area lies on the east slopes of the Little Belt Mountains. Both the Judith and Smith Rivers have cut twisted canyons through the Little Belt Mountains. Their streams support native cutthroat and rainbow trout.

The Castle Mountains seem like an island hunting preserve with healthy populations of elk and deer. While the Highwood and Bear Paw mountains offer bald peaks high above the plains. Ice caves in limestone of the Big Snowy Mountains attract hikers of all ages.

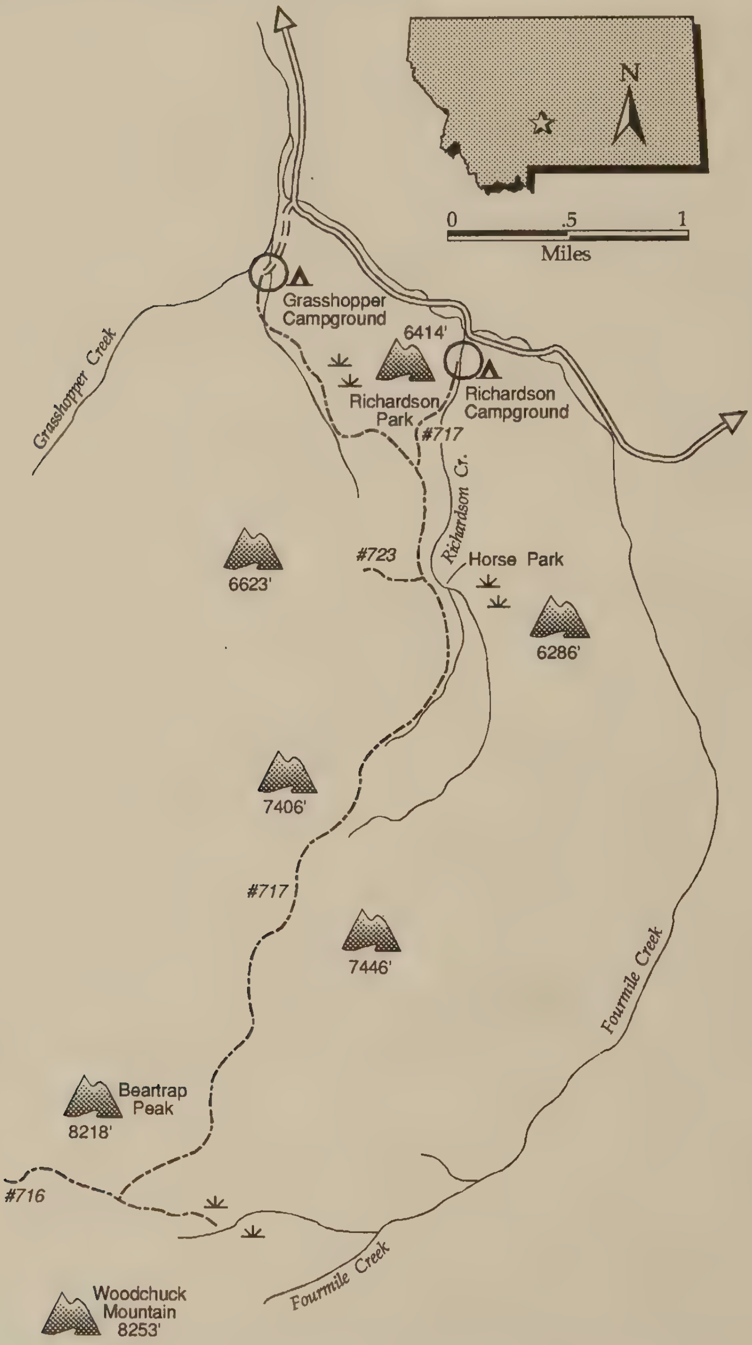
HIKE 101 BEARTRAP PEAK

General description: An uphill 10-mile, round-trip hike to a peak high in the Castle Mountains.
General location: Just east of White Sulphur Springs in the heart of the Castle Mountains.
Maps: Fourmile Springs and Manager Park USGS Quads and Lewis and Clark National Forest Travel Plan Map.
Special attractions: Beartrap Peak and views of the surrounding mountain ranges.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain to Beartrap Peak: 2,400 ft.
Season: Late May through September.
Information: District Ranger, Kings Hill Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest, 204 West Folsom Box A, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645, or call (406) 547-3361.

The hike: Just east of White Sulphur Springs, there is a place where the coyotes scavenge, and the elk frolic much as they did before the white man came. Here lies an island range, the Castle Mountains, where lodgepole pine blanket the slopes.

To reach the trailhead, drive north of White Sulphur Springs on U.S. Highway 89 for three miles and turn right (east) on U.S. Highway 12 for four miles. Then, turn right (south) on Fourmile Creek Road to Grasshopper and Richardson Campgrounds. Start from either campground. This is also a great place to car camp. Outhouses and parking spaces are available. Both of these

HIKE 101 *BEARTRAP PEAK*



0
.5
1
Miles
N
Grasshopper Campground
Grasshopper Creek
6414'
Richardson Park
Richardson Campground
#717
Richardson Cr.
#723
Horse Park
6623'
6286'
7406'
#717
7446'
Fourmile Creek
Beartrap Peak
8218'
#716
Fourmile Creek
Woodchuck Mountain
8253'

campgrounds offer quiet settings next to clear mountain streams, lush meadows, and dense forests.

The trail leaves from the south end of Grasshopper Campground through a gate. The gate is needed to prevent cattle that graze on public lands from interfering with campers. The trail follows East Fork of Grasshopper Creek for less than a mile before turning east and up the slope. Pass through groves of trees and silent meadows. This hike is best early in the morning, when the sun has a chance to shine through beads of dew. The trail opens up into Richardson Park, which is basically a meadow skirted with aspen. After 1.5 miles, the trail intersects Trail # 717 from Richardson Campground.

To start the hike from Richardson Campground, drive an additional mile up Fourmile Road and turn right. The hike from here is a mile shorter but steeper. Cross Richardson Creek on Elk Peak Trail # 717 to the west shore, walk through a meadow turning south, and begin ascending the ridge. This 0.5 mile ascent is steep. Be sure to carry plenty of water. At the top of the hill, the trail intersects Grasshopper Campground Trail.

Follow the trail south, left from Richardson and straight from Grasshopper. After walking through the trees for a short distance, the trail forks. Take the left Trail # 717, not Trail # 723 to the right. Trail # 717 descends quickly, following Richardson Creek into Horse Park. Horse Park is a series of beautiful mountain meadows studded with willows that protect the creek. The trail stays on the west side of Richardson Creek across Horse Park. Watch for blazes south across the meadows.

After Horse Park, the signs of grazing disappear. Walk softly through the quiet forest and look for wildlife. This is not bear country so silence is alright. The trail climbs steadily crossing several streams and meadows. For the most part, the scenery is sunlight splashing between the lodgepole. The climb lasts between two and three miles. Bring water. This area drys out fast.

Once the trail flattens out, you are just east of Beartrap Peak. You might not even know it, because the mountain is just a continuation of the slopes above the trail.

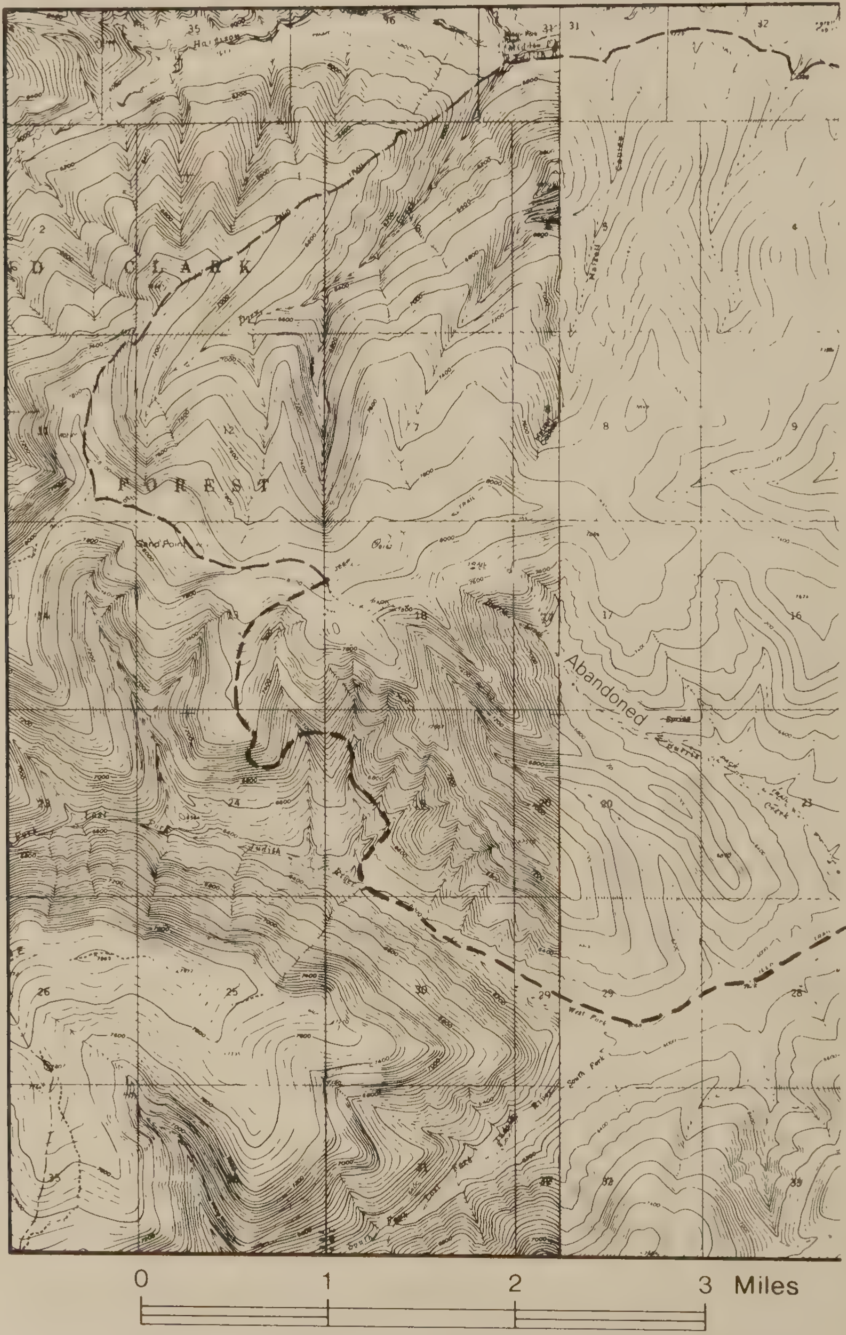
Curving around the mountain the trail intersects Woodchuck Trail # 716. It is possible to make a loop using this trail. Check your map. Turn left and continue on Elk Peak Trail # 717 to the meadow below. From this meadow in the heart of the Castle Mountains, the view is covered with uncut forest slopes adorned with wildflowers.

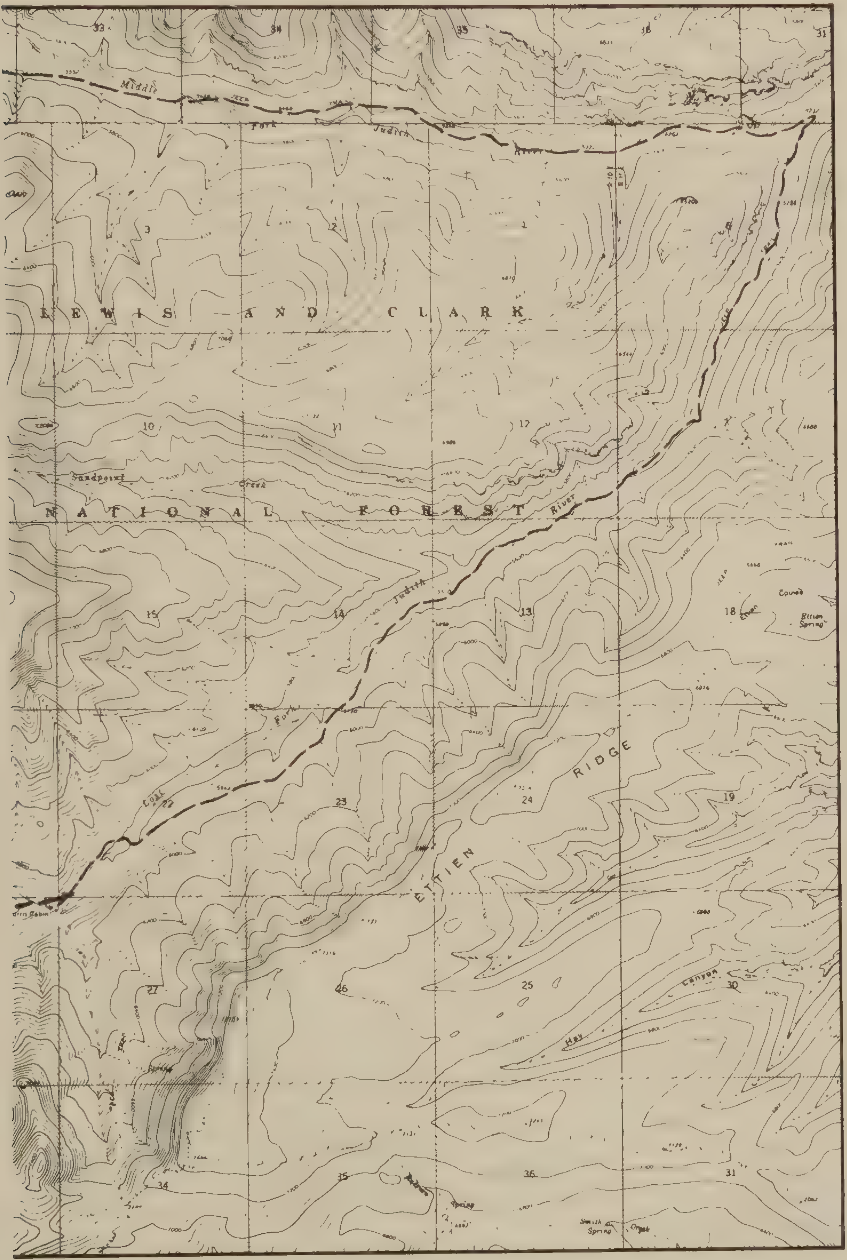
Retrace your steps to the trailhead. This hike is a good early season hike, dry in May. It is good physical conditioning for more strenuous summer hikes. Also, mornings are the coolest and most beautiful.—*Russ Schneider*

HIKE 102 *MIDDLE FORK, LOST FORK OF THE JUDITH*

General description: A fairly demanding 3-day loop.
General location: 100 miles southeast of Great Falls in the Little Belt Mountains.
Maps: Sand Point and Ettien Springs USGS Quads, and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Map (Jefferson Division).
Special attractions: Large roadless area with major streams and 1,000-foot limestone cliffs.

HIKE 102 *MIDDLE FORK, LOST FORK OF THE JUDITH*


CLARK
FOREST
Sand Point
Abandoned
Lost Fork
Judith
West Fork
South Fork
0
1
2
3 Miles


33
34
35
36
31
Middle Fork Judith River
JEEP TRAIL
3
2
1
LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL FOREST
10
11
12
Sandpoint Creek
Judith River
15
14
13
18
TRAIL
JEEP
Bitton Spring
Fork
Lost
22
23
24
RIDGE
ETTIEN
19
27
26
25
30
Hay Canyon
34
35
36
31
Spring
Smith Spring
Creek

Special attractions: Large roadless area with major streams and 1,000-foot limestone cliffs.
Difficulty: Difficult
Elevation gain: 4,314 feet.
Elevation loss: 4,314 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Judith Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Box 484, Stanford, MT 59479, or call (406) 566-2292.

The hike: Of all the large roadless areas in Montana, the Middle Fork of the Judith may be the least popular with hikers—not because it doesn't have good hiking (because it does) but because few wilderness travelers know about it. The 81,000-acre de facto wilderness has great stream fishing for native cutthroat, a large big-game population, and vistas to rival any wildland.

To find the trailhead, take U.S. Highway 12 east from White Sulphur Springs for about eighteen miles until you reach the small town of Checkerboard. Go about six miles east of Checkerboard and turn left (north) onto a gravel road (Forest Road #274) to the Whitetail Guard Station, about ten miles north of the highway. Go past the guard station and stay on FR #274 until you intersect Road #487. Take Road #487 one mile northeast and then turn north onto Road #821. Stay on this road until you reach the Holiday Camp trailhead for Trail #433 to Burris Cabin. This trailhead can also be reached via Forest Road #487 from Utica on the north side of the Little Belts.

Unlike most hikes, this trail loses elevation rapidly from the trailhead, as it drops three miles from the ridge top to the Lost Fork of the Judith and to Burris Cabin, an abandoned homestead. This section of trail is heavily used by hikers, horses, and motorcycles.

If you started late in the day, you might want to camp along the Lost Fork above Burris Cabin. There's plenty of good sites, complete with firewood and a beautiful stream filled with native cutthroat. This location was in the middle of the Sand Point Fire, which burned more than 11,300 acres in July 1985.

At Burris Cabin, the trail intersects with Trail #409, which follows the length of Lost Fork. Take Trail #409 southwest up the Lost Fork for about 1.5 miles until you reach Trail #422. It's about four miles uphill from here to Sand Point, an 8,211-foot knob on the divide separating the Lost Fork and Middle Fork drainages.

This part of the trip offers an opportunity to study the natural effects of fire on forested plant communities. Close examination will reveal newly established lodgepole pine seedlings that started from seeds released from storage in thousands of serotinous cones. Abundant forage stimulated by fire feeds wildlife, and beaver dams add stability to the riparian system by storing sediment.

After relishing the view from the top of Sand Point for a few minutes, go northwest for about half a mile to a trail junction. Take a right here and head down (north) on Doerr Creek Trail #407 about three miles into the Middle Fork of the Judith River.

You come out onto the bottomland at the Middle Fork Cabin. Don't camp on this private land. Take a right and head downstream, selecting one of many good campsites along the Middle Fork.

Like the Lost Fork, the Middle Fork offers excellent cutthroat fishing and scenery, especially towering limestone cliffs. From the Middle Fork Cabin, you're actually walking on a lightly traveled jeep road for about six miles downstream until you reach the point where the Lost Fork joins the Middle Fork. Take a right at this trail junction and follow the Lost Fork about seven miles upstream to the Burris Cabin, where you must retrace your steps three miles uphill to your vehicle.

All told, this is about a thirty-mile loop trail that introduces you to the drainage of much of the Middle Fork of the Judith River. The Forest Service, in the Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan, has allocated most of the area for semi-primitive recreation.—*Bill Cunningham*

HIKE 103 *BIG SNOWIES CREST*

General description: A long but fairly easy hike on a flat ridge in a little-known mountain range.
General location: 20 miles south of Lewistown.
Maps: Crystal Lake, Jump Off Peak, and Half Moon Canyon USGS Quads; and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Map (Jefferson Division).
Special attractions: Flat alpine prairie, ice cave, and unrestricted views of eastern Montana from the Missouri River to the Beartooth Plateau.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,000 feet.
Season: June through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Judith Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Box 484, Stanford, MT 59479, or call (406) 566-2292.

The hike: The Big Snowies consist of one massive, broad-based ridge flanked by cirques and streams. The main western segment of this ridge runs for twelve miles and ranges from 8,500 to 8,700 feet in elevation.

The trail to the ridge can be reached by turning south from U.S. Highway 87/Montana Highway 200 onto the Crystal Lake Road about eight miles west of Lewistown (or five miles east of Moore). From there, it's about twenty-two miles to Crystal Lake. The trailhead for Uhlhorn Trail #493 is at the south end of the lake near the campground. The trail, named after a longtime district ranger and Lewistown community leader, Carl Uhlhorn, climbs more than 2,000 feet in 3.1 miles to the crest of the Big Snowies. At this point, the hard hiking becomes a stroll across level prairie-style tundra interspersed with mangled thickets of trees.

Here at the top, Trail #493 intersects the West Peak Trail #490. Take this trail and follow it either way along the ridge. It isn't always easy to follow and is often marked only by rock cairns. If you lose the trail, stay on high ground until it materializes again.

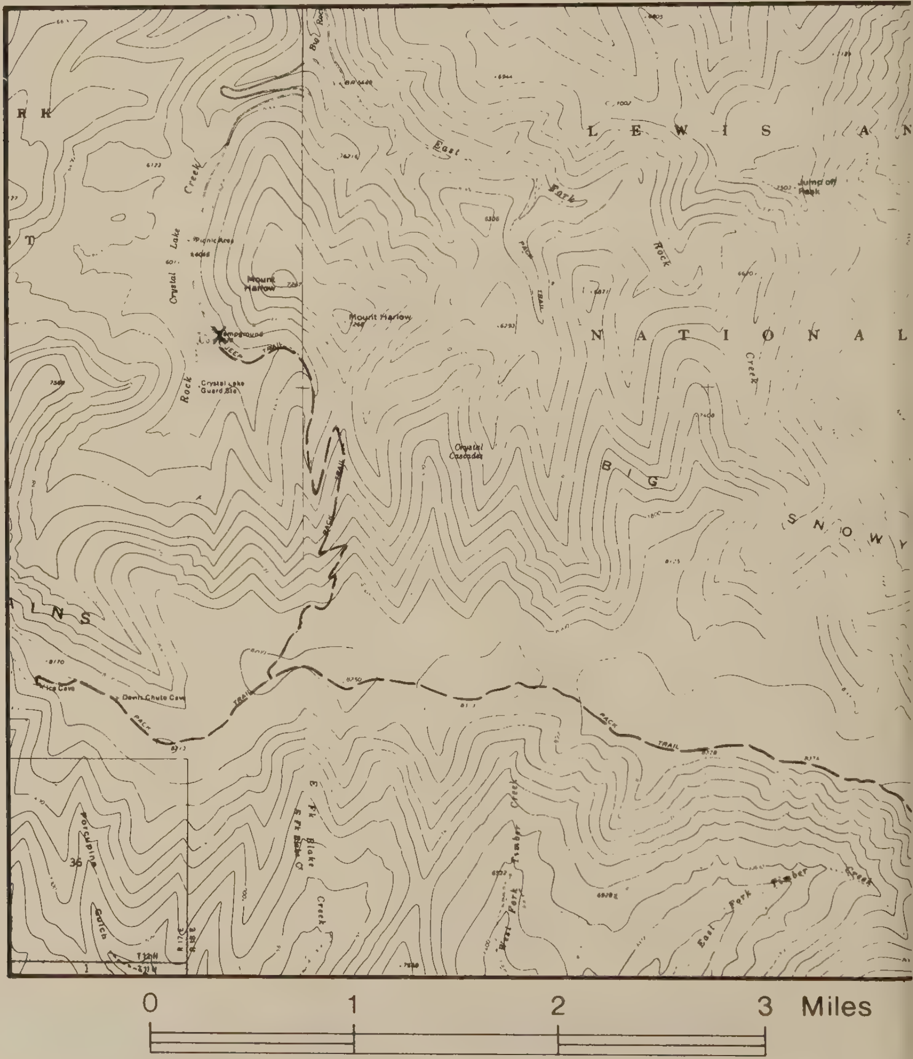
There is no water anywhere along the West Peak Trail. Day hikers must carry up what they need. Overnighters can usually melt snow for their water if they wish. Massive snowdrifts form near the top of the crest and last through July.

For a good day hike to a rare ice cave, take the West Peak Trail #490 west 1.5 miles to the intersection with Trail #654, which branches to the south. From that intersection, it is 0.2 mile on a south slope slightly downhill through scattered trees and rocks to the ice cave. This cave is one room full of ice from a combination of water seeping out of the rock and snow blowing in through the entrance. A flashlight is helpful but not necessary.

For a nice loop from the ice cave back to Crystal Lake, continue west on Trail #490 to Grandview Trail #403. Take this trail north along a scenic narrow ridge that leads past Grandview Point, a beautiful overlook of Crystal lake.

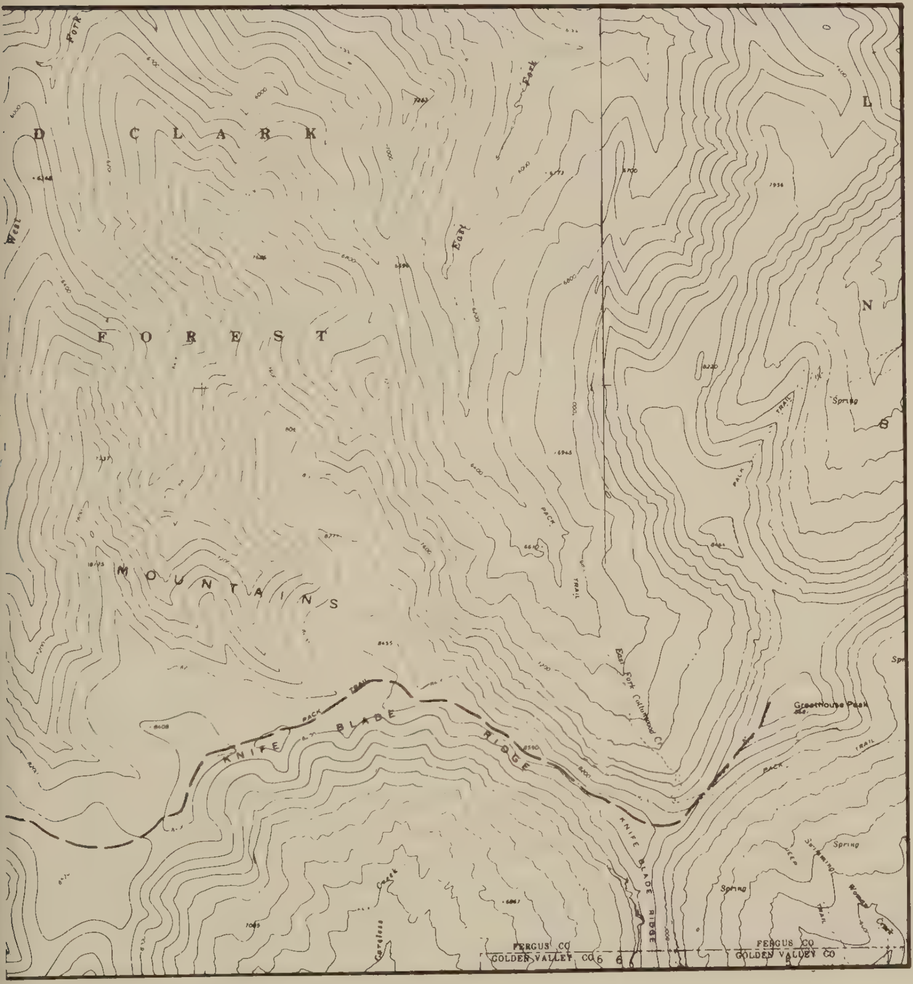
For a good overnighter, try Greathouse Peak, ten miles past the West Peak junction going east. This "peak" is the high point of the range at 8,681 feet. The route to Greathouse Peak holds one surprise after another. The trail crosses large expanses of alpine grasses that give incredible visual harmony to the endless prairies off to either side, 4,000 feet below. Then there is a stretch called "Knife Blade Ridge," where the mile-wide crest narrows to a few feet

HIKE 103 *BIG SNOWIES CREST*


LEWIS AN
NATIONAL
BIG SNOWY
Crystal Lake
Picnic Area
Mount Harlow
Mount Harlow
Campground
JEEP TRAIL
TRAIL
Crystal Lake Guard Sta
Rock Creek
East Fork Rock Creek
Jump off Peak
Crystal Cascades
Ice Cave
Devils Chute Cave
PACK TRAIL
PACK TRAIL
Porcupine Gulch
36
E Fk Blake Creek
Timber Creek
West Fork
East Fork Timber Creek
T12N
R17E
0
1
2
3 Miles

and drops off abruptly on either side. In the center of Knifeblade Ridge, the trail dips into a primitive little pass where there is a four-way trail junction. Stay on the obvious ridge trail to reach the top of Greathouse Peak. From here, you can retrace your route to Crystal Lake or choose one of three trails that descend directly from the peak area to trailheads you'll need a good map and a little luck to find by vehicle.

The Big Snowies area is a proposed wilderness and a semi-primitive recreation area under the Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan. It is a strange area, gentle yet primitive and remote—an easy place to traverse, but also where a spirit of timeless wildness prevails.—*Pat Caffrey*


Fork
D
C L A R K
Fork
L
West
East
F O R E S T
N
Spring
TRAIL
PACK
PACK
TRAIL
M O U N T A I N S
East Fork Cottonwood Cr
PACK TRAIL
KNIFE BLADE
RIDGE
Greathouse Peak
PACK
TRAIL
KNIFE BLADE RIDGE
Spring
Spring
Spring
Careless
FERGUS CO
GOLDEN VALLEY CO
FERGUS CO
GOLDEN VALLEY CO

HIKE 104 *CRAZY MOUNTAINS*

General description: A moderately strenuous 23-mile, four-day hike crossing two high ridges.
General location: 25 miles north of Big Timber.
Maps: Crazy Peak, Campfire Lake, and Amelong Creek USGS Quads; and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (north half).
Special attractions: Rugged, alpine scenery, refreshing streams and lakes, and mountain goats.
Difficulty: Difficult
Elevation gain: 5,780 feet.
Elevation loss: 5,420 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Big Timber Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 196, Big Timber, MT 59011, or call (406) 932-5155.

The hike: The Crazies stand majestically above the plains near Livingston and Big Timber. Well-developed glacial scouring has produced the enchanting valleys that contain numerous high-elevation lakes. Beautifully sculptured peaks and serrated ridges radiating from the core of the range rise more than 11,000 feet, offering views of the surrounding mountains and prairies.

This hike is designed to last at least three nights, giving you a glimpse of how pleasant life can be in the heart of goat country, the Crazy Mountains.

The trailhead on the east side of this hike is at Half Moon Campground, about twenty-five miles northwest of Big Timber. Drive eleven miles north of Big Timber on U.S. Highway 191 until you see the road turning left up the Big Timber Canyon. This junction is marked with a sign. This gravel road winds for another fourteen miles across private property and through two gates before you arrive at the Forest Service's Half Moon Campground below Big Timber Canyon.

The route for the first 1.5 miles beyond Half Moon Campground is a hastily bulldozed jeep road, built in 1981 to accommodate dredge-mining for gold at Twin Lakes at the canyon head. This has been stopped by the Forest Service.

After less than a mile, take a short side trip to the south to see Big Timber Falls, a roaring waterfall set deep in the canyon rock.

The jeep track ends at the western side of Section 5 on your map. Here the actual trail remains (#119), and you may still see some signs of helicopter-mining activity above Twin Lakes.

You traverse two well-constructed bridges at the two- to three-mile mark, providing ample support in crossing Big Timber Creek even during high runoff periods. Another mile along the trail, Granite Peak stands out as the dominant feature of the landscape. This peak is also the location of a long side-trip possibility. At the base of the mountain, a trail turns off left to Blue Lake.

The Blue Lake Trail almost immediately crosses Big Timber Creek on a logjam. Then it switchbacks for a mile up a rock slide, through forest, and past a couple of abandoned cabins before reaching a vantage point over Blue Lake, a mountain gem with a fair supply of small rainbow trout for anglers. The trail ends at this point with a view of Crazy Peak, highest in the range.

Outstanding scenery along the Big Timber Canyon trail in the Crazy Mountains. Bruce Chesler photo.

Granite, and Thunder—all situated higher than 8,000 feet. Pear and Druckmiller lakes, also nearby, sit in a deep cirque at close to 9,000 feet in elevation. Set up a base camp at Granite Lake, and you could stay busy for many days climbing, fishing, and contemplating around the shores of these incredible lakes.

Meanwhile, back on the way to Twin Lakes, the trail skirts Granite Peak for about one mile. Moderate climbing and a route crossing an avalanche path are encountered after five miles of traveling from Half Moon Campground. The trail breaks out into open meadows beside Lower Twin Lake. Camp at one of the drier sites. Take in the hard-to-beat views of the surrounding mountains. Or follow the trail around the first lake and look for a cozy campsite along the stream that separates Twin Lakes. There is an adequate supply of firewood at both sites.

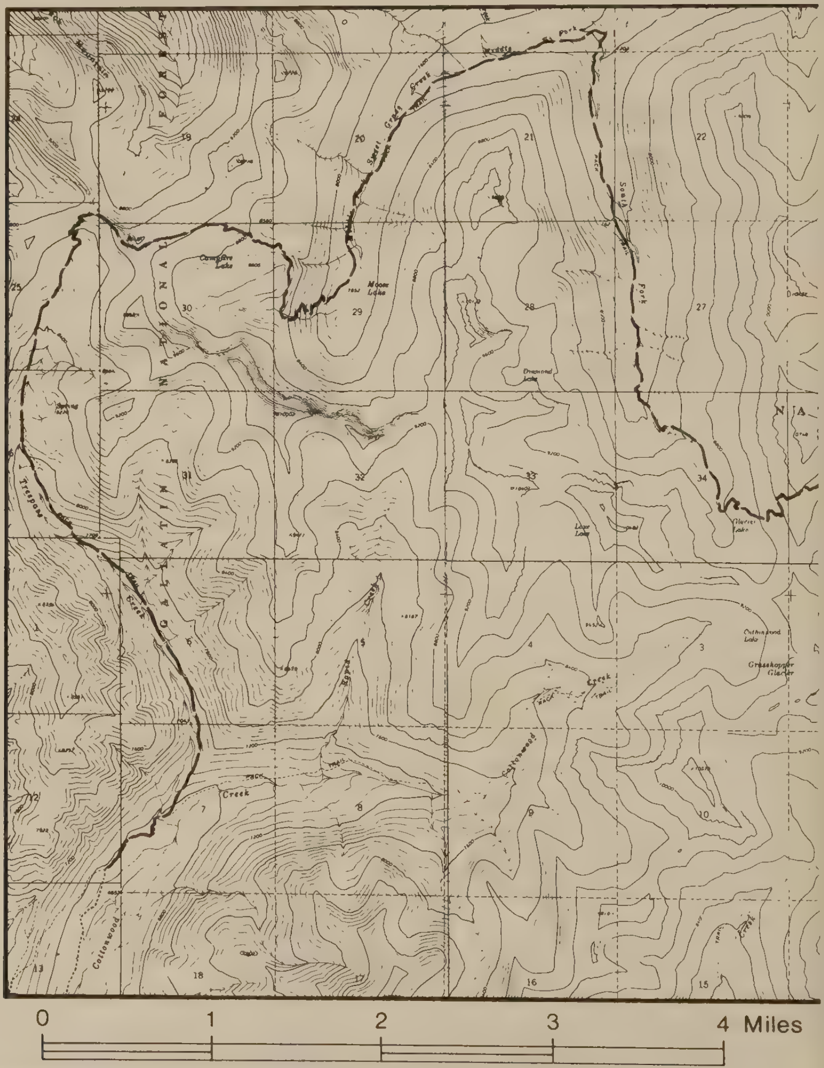
From Upper Twin Lake, the trail begins a steep ascent. Plan on at least an hour for this 2,000-foot trudge. Switchbacking across the high, open country, you'll be treated to wildflowers and cascading brooks. The stiff climb is more than compensated for by an awesome view from the top of the Big Timber Creek drainage and surrounding ridges. From this pass, a short scramble along the ridge to the north will put you on top of Conical Peak.

Dropping down one mile into the South Fork of Sweetgrass Creek drainage, the trail reaches Glacier Lake. This alpine lake is fed by sheer waterfalls and a long summer snowmelt. Due to the irregular, rocky topography, campsites along this beautiful lake are hard to find. Stay around the area for lunch; drink some of its sparkling, chilled water; and watch the icebergs float across the blue-green lake.

The trail leaves Glacier Lake and drops steadily for more than a mile through the trees until a crossing of the South Fork is necessary. There is no bridge at this point, and the crossing can be dangerous during spring runoff.

Another quarter-mile downstream, you cross a series of meadows that may temporarily obscure the trail, as will rock slides in the area. There are some

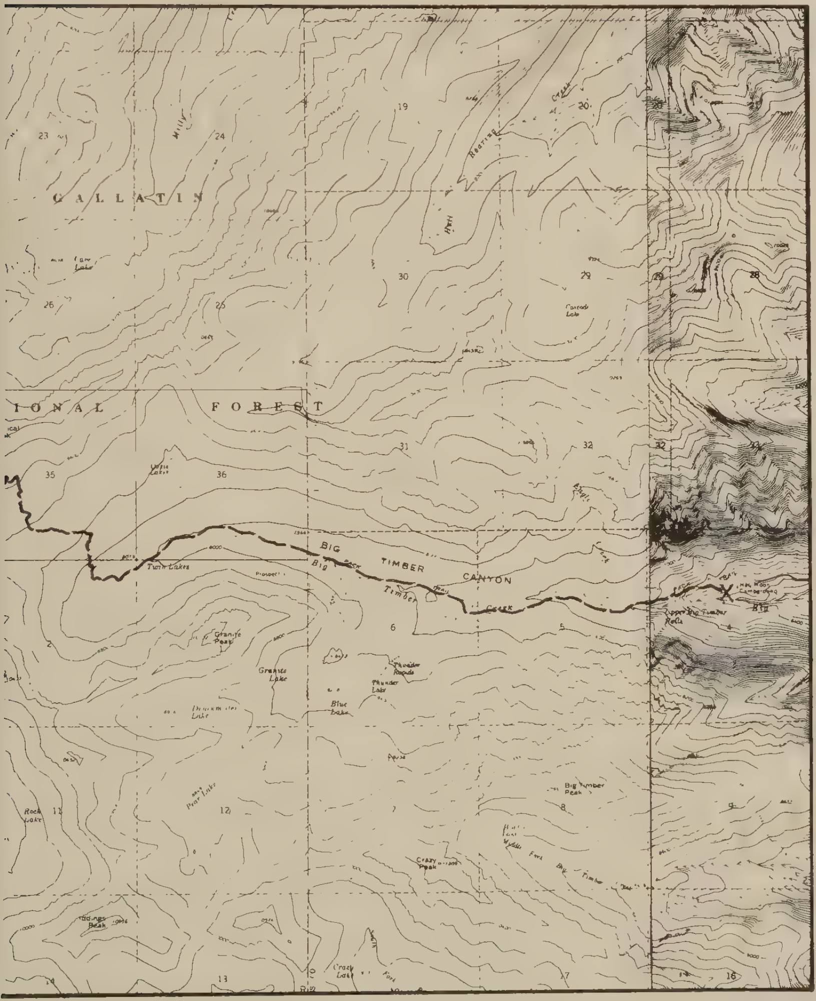
HIKE 104 *CRAZY MOUNTAINS*



Sweet Grass Creek
Campfire Lake
Moose Lake
South Fork
Diamond Lake
Glacier Lake
Trespass Creek
Cottonwood Lake
Grasshopper Glacier
Cottonwood
Creek
0
1
2
3
4 Miles

choice campsites in this part of the valley. Plan on spending your second night at either the meadows or at the stream's junction with the Middle Fork of Sweetgrass Creek two miles downstream. The Middle Fork has fair fishing for small cutthroat.

Where the South Fork joins the Middle Fork, the trail begins heading upstream through forested slopes on the way to Moose and Campfire lakes. The next two miles wind upstream to Moose Lake. Above Moose Lake, the trail switchbacks 800 feet up in one mile to Campfire Lake. Don't get this large body of water confused with the small trailside pools that lie in depressions nearby. Campfire Lake is a big, irregularly shaped beauty that reflects



GALLATIN
NATIONAL
FOREST
BIG TIMBER CANYON
Big Timber Creek
Twin Lakes
Granite Peak
Granite Lake
Thunder Lake
Blue Lake
Big Timber Peak
Crazy Peak
Cascade Lake
Rock Lake
Crazy Lake
Big Timber Falls
19
20
23
24
25
26
29
30
31
32
35
36
5
6
8
12
13
16
17

the surrounding peaks and ridges nicely and has good fishing for twelve- to fourteen-inch rainbows. Campsites around this lake have been abused in the past, so be extra careful, particularly with your fire if you must have one. And consider packing out trash left by thoughtless visitors.

From Campfire Lake, the trail climbs another 1,000 feet to the divide separating the Middle Fork of Sweetgrass Creek and Trespass Creek drainages. At this 9,500-foot vantage point, the well-defined Crazy Mountain high country is at eye level. Goat tracks cross rock and snowfields that lie precipitously above green valleys and shining lakes. The Bridgers, Absarokas, Castles, and Spanish Peaks are all visible on a clear day—an inspiring view to say the least. From this point, the lakes of the Sweetgrass drainage shine invitingly in the morning sun, and to the east the endless expanse of prairie overwhelms visitors unaccustomed to such vistas.

Dropping steeply into the basin at the head of Trespass Creek, the trail winds across talus slopes and through lush meadows for about two miles before entering the trees. The remaining five miles of this hike follow the east side of Trespass Creek, crossing two small tributaries of this stream.

The Trespass Creek Trail comes into Cottonwood Creek Canyon and joins another roughly bulldozed road that goes up the canyon to a second-home subdivision right in the heart of the Crazies. This is another legacy of the "checkerboard" ownership of these magnificent mountains. You should have arranged to leave another vehicle somewhere along this road to complete your shuttle. Check with the Forest Service as to road conditions on this jeep track, which eventually, down the canyon, turns into the Cottonwood Creek Road and joins U.S. Highway 89 at Clyde Park.

The Crazies have long been fought for protection under wilderness designation and are included in all recent wilderness bills.—*Bruce Chesler*

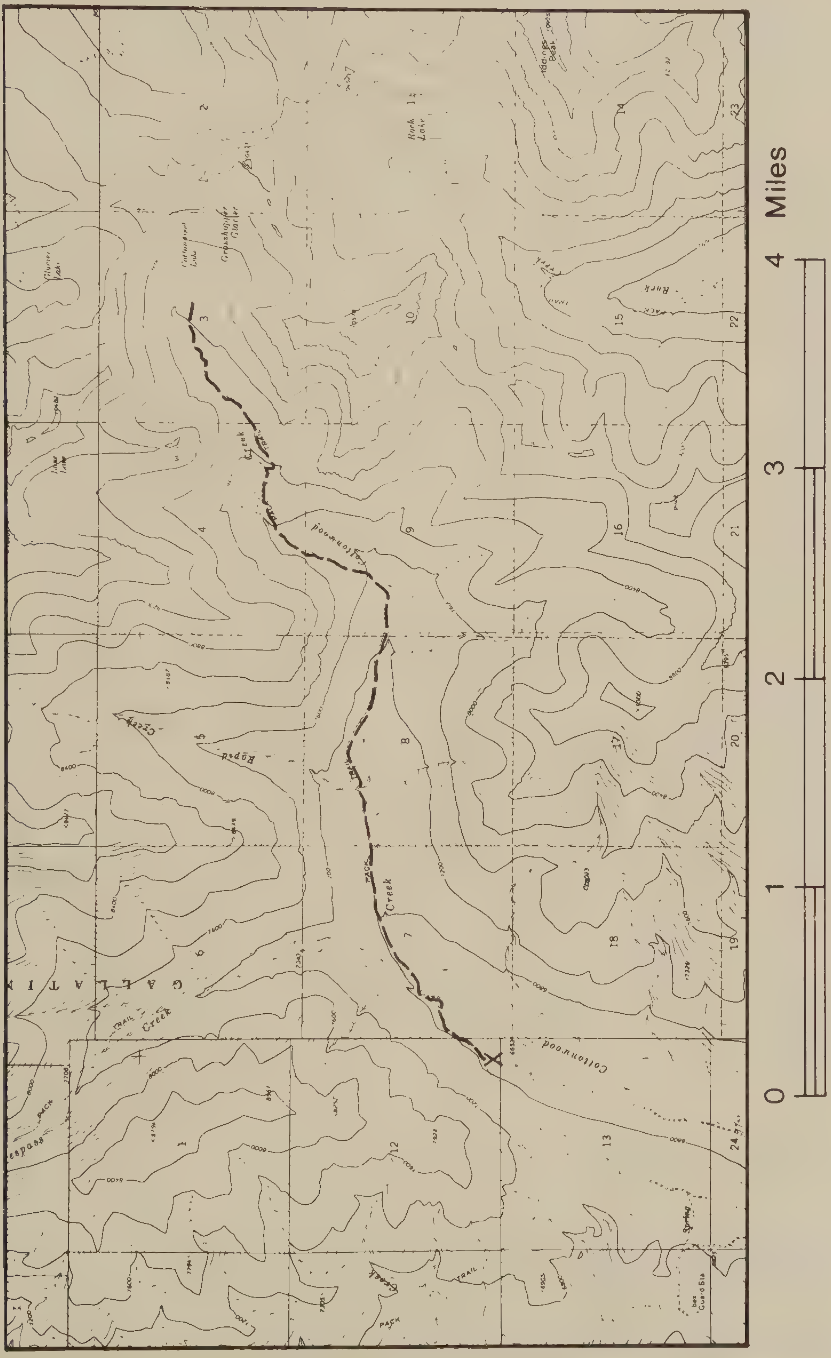
HIKE 105 COTTONWOOD LAKE

General description: A moderate overnighter or long day hike.
General location: 40 miles northeast of Livingston in the Crazy Mountains.
Maps: Campfire Lake and Crazy Peak USGS Quads, and Gallatin National Forest Map (Livingston Ranger District).
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 2,347 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write the District Ranger, Livingston Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Route 62, Box 3197, Livingston, MT 59047, or call (406) 222-1892.

The hike: The first mile of this trail retraces the last mile of the Crazy Mountain traverse hike. Although the two hikes could be combined, together they would make for a long, strenuous backpack trip.

To find the trailhead for the Cottonwood Lake trip, take Interstate 90 six miles northeast of Livingston to U.S. Highway 89. Travel US 89 fourteen miles north to Clyde Park. About half a mile past Clyde Park, turn right onto a heavily used gravel road (known locally as the Cottonwood Creek Road)

HIKE 105 *COTTONWOOD LAKE*


Cottonwood Lake
Grasshopper Glacier
Rock Lake
Creek
Cottonwood
Cottonwood
Cottonwood Creek
PACK TRAIL
Rapid Creek
GALLATIN
Miles
0
1
2
3
4

and follow it northeast for twelve miles to the Ibex Guard Station junction. Instead of turning left to the guard station, continue going straight up Cottonwood Creek Road. The trail begins about three miles past the guard station junction, where the road is blocked to motorized vehicles, except motorcycles and snowmobiles, with a barrier of large rocks.

In the last few miles, you go through three gates. However, don't fret; this is a public road. Just be sure to close the gates.

The first mile (going past the Trespass Creek Trail junction) is a gated jeep road. By using your topo map, you should be able to find the trail where it picks up again past a large open area that is—believe it or not—the site of a proposed subdivision for vacation homes. The "checkerboarding" between private and public land in the Crazy Mountains and in other Montana national forests makes this development possible.

Where the trail crosses the stream and leaves this private land, check out the narrow canyon with several waterfalls that isn't visible from the trail. It's about two hundred yards upstream from the stream crossing.

The trail is heavily used and well-maintained—with one exception. Toward the end of the hike, the trail passes through some glacial moraine, sometimes disappearing in the rocks. But at this point in the hike you really don't need a trail as you can look ahead and see where the lake is.

The Crazies get lots of snow, so wait until late summer for this trip. There are at least four good sources of drinking water along the trail, but there's a 1.5-mile dry stretch between the outlet of Long Lake and a group of small ponds just before Cottonwood Lake.

The lower end of the lake has several excellent campsites. But don't forget your stove, as firewood is scarce and should only be used in an emergency. The lake has a good population of pan-sized cutthroat.

If you have extra time at this lake, try a couple of exciting side trips. Perhaps the best is to head east from the lake for a two-hour climb up to Grasshopper Glacier. The unusually large glacier lies on the major north/south crest in the Crazy Mountains and offers a spectacular view into the Big Timber Creek drainage, which is dotted with lakes. You can also see 11,214-foot Crazy Peak, the highest in the Crazy Mountains. The climb to Grasshopper Glacier is difficult but not technical and can be made by most hikers exercising caution.

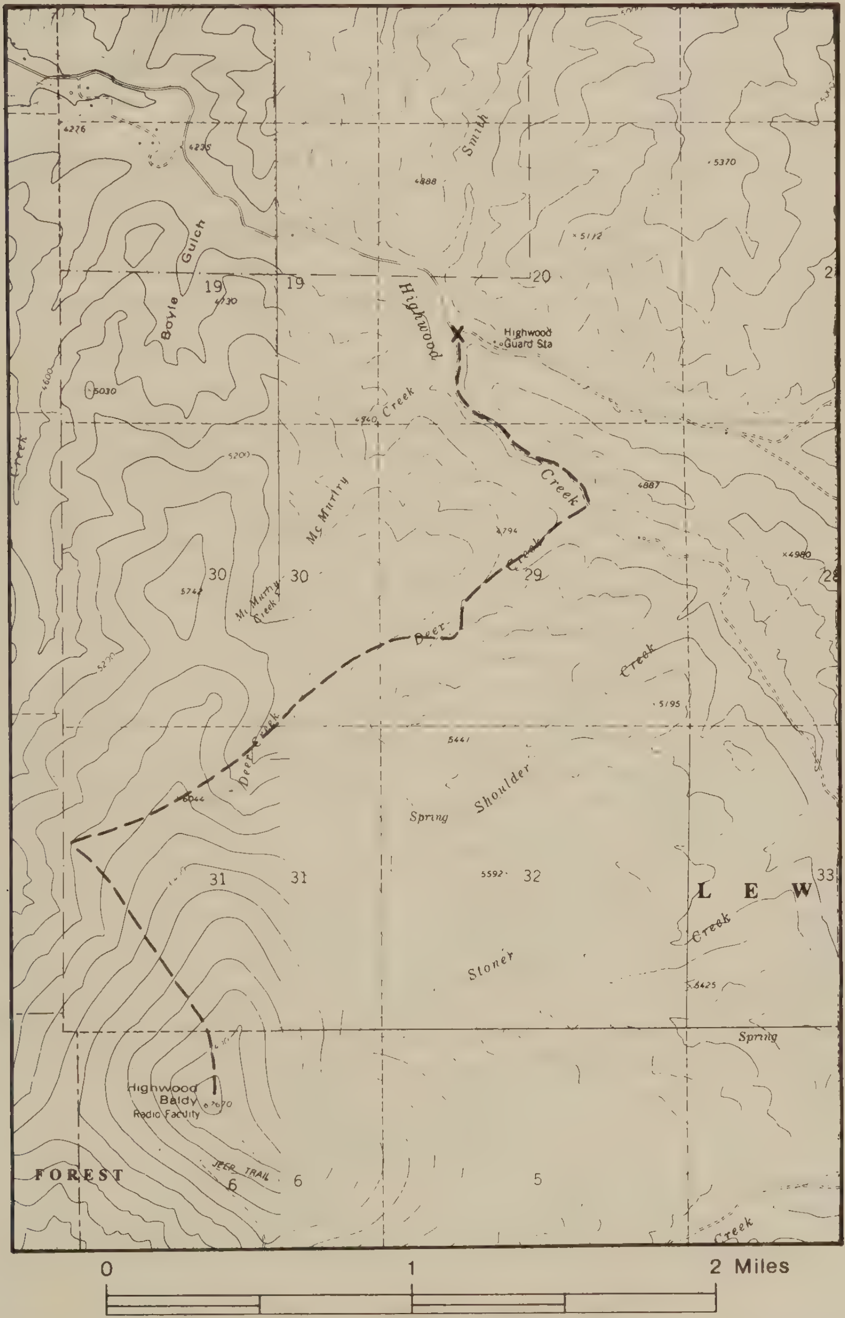
For a shorter side trip, make an easy, fifteen-minute scramble south from the lake up a rocky slope to the divide between Rock Creek Lake and Cottonwood Lake. From here you can see many of the major peaks in the Crazies.

When you get back from the hike, take a few minutes to encourage the Forest Service to hurry up efforts to resolve the land-use conflicts caused by checkerboard ownership.—*Bill Cunningham*

HIKE 106 *HIGHWOOD BALDY*

General description: A strenuous day hike.
General location: 30 miles east of Great Falls in the Highwood Mountains.
Maps: Highwood Baldy and Arrow Peak USGS Quads, and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Map (Jefferson Division).
Special attraction: An outstanding view of the high plains from the summit of Baldy Mountain.

HIKE 106 *HIGHWOOD BALDY*


Highwood
Creek
Smith
Highwood Guard Sta
Boyle
Gulch
McMurtry
Mc Murtry Creek
Deer
Creek
Deer Creek
Spring
Shoulder
Stoner
Creek
Spring
Highwood Baldy
Radio Facility
JEEP TRAIL
FOREST
L E W
4276
4235
4888
5370
5112
4730
5030
4600
4740
5200
4887
4794
4980
5742
5200
5195
5441
6044
5592
6425
7670
19
19
20
2
30
30
29
28
31
31
32
33
6
6
5
0
1
2 Miles

Difficulty: Difficult
Elevation gain: 2,600 feet.
Season: May to October.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Judith Ranger District, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Box 484, Stanford, MT 59479, or call (406) 566-2292.

The hike: The Highwoods are one of Montana's isolated mountain ranges that rise like islands from a grass ocean. Hiking in them can be as pleasant as straddling the Continental Divide.

Find the trailhead by taking U.S. Highway 87 east from Great Falls for about three miles. Then turn north onto paved County Road #228. Follow this road north for a few miles before it turns east. After about fifteen miles of pavement, the road turns to gravel and follows Highwood Creek to Highwood Guard Station. Go right at the fork near the guard station and follow a rough jeep track for about one mile until the trailhead appears on the right.

From the jeep track, the trail goes up the Deer Creek drainage. As you approach Mount Baldy, it gets steep, primitive, dry, and difficult to follow. Be sure to bring water.

It's about three miles and a 2,600-foot elevation gain to the summit of Baldy. Only experienced hikers should try this hike. It's a six-mile round-trip that takes even good hikers a full day.

During July and August, mosquitoes and deer flies can be a problem along the first mile of this hike where the jeep road parallels Highwood Creek. There is no bear danger.

August through October is best for this hike. If you can hit it just as the aspen and cottonwoods turn gold, you can experience east-of-the-divide scenery at its very best.

Motorized vehicles are permitted on this trail. The area—especially the last half of the hike—is as wild as any wilderness area. Wildlife is fairly abundant, and most wildflowers common east of the divide as well as high-mountain species can be found.

The high point of the trip—in more ways than one—is Mount Baldy. From the 7,600-foot summit, you get an awe-inspiring view of the prairie environment, the high plains of Montana.

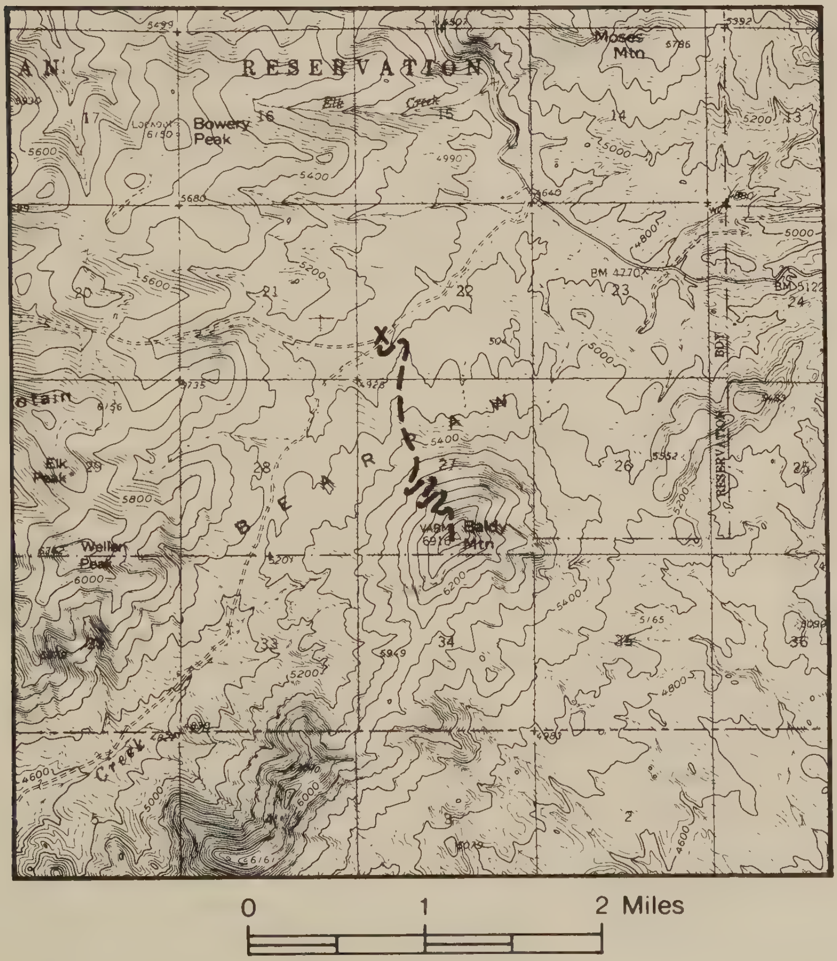
From Baldy, you can add four miles to your hike with a cross-country side trip to Pinewood Peak, to the west of and easily visible from the summit of Baldy. If you try for both summits in one day, make sure you have enough time; don't get caught in the dark.

Few hikers make this an overnight backpack, but some stay the night two miles up the road at Briggs Creek in Thain Creek Campground, which is fairly heavily used by recreational vehicle campers.—*Larry Thompson*

HIKE 107 *BEAR PAW BALDY*

General description: A short but rugged day hike to the highest point in the Bear Paw Mountains.
General location: 25 miles south of Havre on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation.
Map: Warrick USGS Quad.
Special attraction: A super view of nearly all the isolated mountain ranges of central Montana.
Difficulty: Moderate.

HIKE 107 *BEAR PAW BALDY*


AN RESERVATION
Bowery Peak
Lookout 6150
Elk Creek
Moses Mtn
5786
BM 4770
BEAR PAW
RESERVATION BDY
Elk Peak
Weller Peak
Baldy Mtn
6916
Creek
0
1
2 Miles

Elevation gain: 2,200 feet.
Season: May through October.
For more information: Chippewa-Cree Business Committee, Box Elder, MT 59521 or call (406) 395-4207.

The hike: The hike to Mount Baldy in the Bear Paw Mountains resembles the trip to Mount Baldy in the Highwood Mountains east of Great Falls. However, this hike is shorter and the view slightly more impressive.

The trailhead is easy to find. Simply follow Highway 234 south from Havre for about twenty-five miles until you reach Teepee Campground near Rocky Boy Recreation Area, a local ski resort. The trail begins at the far end of the campground.

It's a mere 1.5 miles to the summit of Baldy. Don't attempt it, though, unless you're an experienced hiker. The trail is poorly maintained, rocky, without water, and has a 2,200-foot elevation gain—a little too hefty for a beginner.

The entire hike is on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation. The area is very rugged and remote—too rugged, in fact, for motorized vehicles. After leaving the Teepee Campground, all signs of man disappear.

Although few hikers make this an overnight backpack, many stay at the Teepee Campground and try some of the excellent fishing in the beaver ponds in lower Beaver Creek. A tribal fishing permit is required.

The view from the top of Mount Baldy is unsurpassed. Be sure to pick a clear day for this hike, so you can get the full impact of this vista. Almost all isolated mountain ranges in eastern Montana are visible.

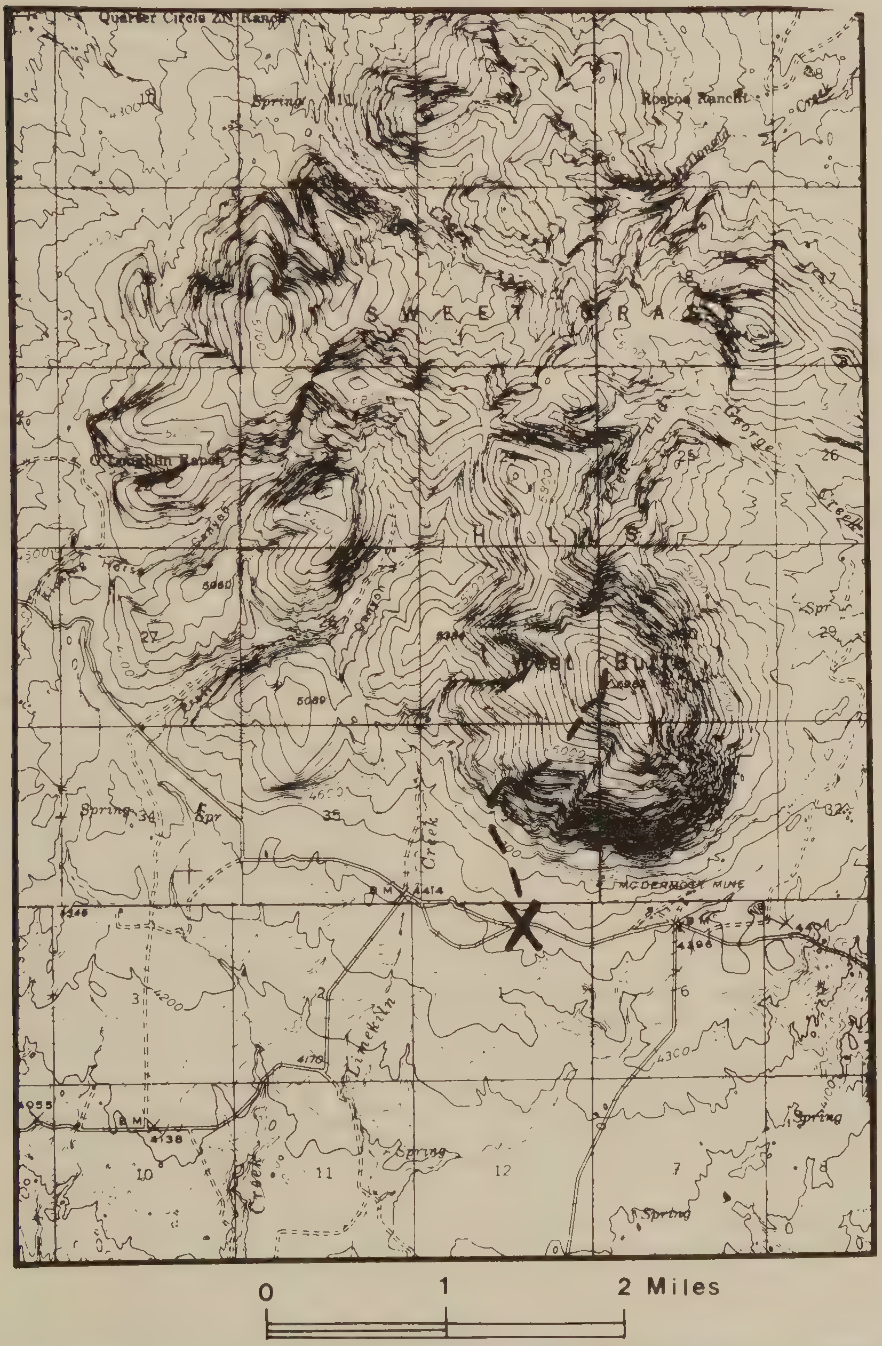
If you have extra time, you might try hiking cross-country for about three miles (six miles round-trip) into the headwaters of Eagle Creek. You will pass through some unusually moist, dense forests for eastern Montana.—*Larry Thompson*

HIKE 108 *WEST BUTTE*

General description: An easy 1.5-mile trek in the Sweetgrass Hills. A moderate climb, but you can take your time.
General location: 35 miles northeast of Shelby.
Map: USGS 15-minute Quad.
Special attractions: Views of the Sweetgrass Hills and the prairies of Montana and Alberta. On a clear day, the peaks of Glacier National Park are visible. Recommended for early summer when everything is green.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 2,080 feet.
Season: May through October.
For more information: Write Phillips Resource Area Bureau of Land Management, 501 S. Second St. E., P.O. Box B, Malta, MT 59538, or call (406) 654-1240.

The hike: Before you write off this wheat- and oil-producing area as a source of wild exhilaration, hop in the car and drive to Sunburst, which is about twenty-six miles north of Shelby on Interstate 15. At the freeway exit, turn east onto the county road and follow it straight for ten miles. It will curve north. There are several side roads, but stay on the main route, which leads to the south

HIKE 108 *WEST BUTTE*


Quarter Circle ZN Ranch
Spring
Roscoe Ranch
SWEET GRASS HILLS
O'Loughlin Ranch
George Creek
West Butte
6983
5069
4600
5000
Spring
Spr
Creek
B M 4414
MCDERMOTT MINE
4406
4300
4200
4170
B M 4138
4055
Limekiln
Creek
Spring
Spring
Spring
0
1
2 Miles

side of 6,983-foot West Butte. You'll be able to see the butte up close and personal.

Park just south of the butte and notice the large cleft-type gully down the middle of it. Stroll up the grassy shoulder just west (left) of the gully. Near the top of this shoulder it's a little steep, and you may have to scramble up some loose rock, but you should soon find a game trail that angles to the north (left) and takes you on up to the summit. There, over 3,000 feet above the prairie, the Indians used to scout the horizon for the telltale cloud of dust raised by a buffalo herd. You'll be glad if you have time to spend, a coat to keep out the wind, and some drinking water. If you ever called the prairie your home, this one's a must.—*Pat Caffrey*

Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness

Overview

For many Montanans, a couple of days in the Beartooths just isn't enough. A trip to the Beartooth Mountains should be a vacation that deserves at least a week. The 944,060-acre Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness is the third most visited wilderness area in the United States. This is surprising considering snow covers the area until late July.

Most people admire the Beartooths for their sheer, unbridled beauty. But many geologists marvel at this range for a different reason. A band of igneous rock rich in rare minerals lies along the northern edge of these mountains. The uplifted granite that comprises most of the range is some of the oldest in the west at more than three billion years old. The Beartooths boast the highest mountain in Montana, Granite Peak at 12,799 feet. From the top of Granite or many other peaks in the range, the view is dizzying. Except for the plains to the north, the mountains seem to go on forever.

With more than 950 lakes and nine major drainages, the Beartooth-Absaroka Wilderness also is a fisherman's paradise. Rainbow, cutthroat, brook, golden, and lake trout thrive in the waterways of the plateau. Though the area is extremely popular, you can usually find a lake to fish at without other people around to spoil your wilderness experience.

Since much of the Beartooth and Absaroka uplift is above 10,000 feet, it is covered with alpine tundra. Because of the high use, proper wilderness camping methods are essential to the preservation of this delicate ecosystem. Northern slopes of the range are included in recent wilderness proposals. Most of what is wilderness, not surprisingly, has no suitable timber. But areas surrounding this alpine plateau are more difficult to preserve because of timber and mining interests.

HIKE 109 *ELBOW LAKE, MOUNT COWEN*

General description: A rugged overnighter.
General location: 20 miles south of Livingston in the Absaroka Mountains, now part of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.
Maps: Emigrant and Mount Cowen USGS Quads, and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Special attraction: Mount Cowen, an incredible mass of rock and the highest point in the Absaroka Range.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,500 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Livingston Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Route 62, Box 3197, Livingston, MT 59047, or call (406) 222-1892.

The hike: The rugged North Absaroka Range forms the east wall of the Paradise Valley south of Livingston along the Yellowstone River. Of all these perilous peaks, 11,206-foot Mount Cowen is the highest.

To find the trailhead, drive south of Livingston on U.S. Highway 89 for about twenty miles to the large Forest Service sign directing you to turn left (east) across the Yellowstone River and onto the Mill Creek Road. Take a left on this road and go 1.5 miles to the trailhead, which is located a quarter-mile before the Snowy Range Ranch.

The trail skirts around the south side of Snowy Range Ranch for a little more than a mile before crossing the East Fork on a new bridge to a trail junction. Be careful to take the Upper Sage Creek Trail, which immediately starts steeply to the northwest.

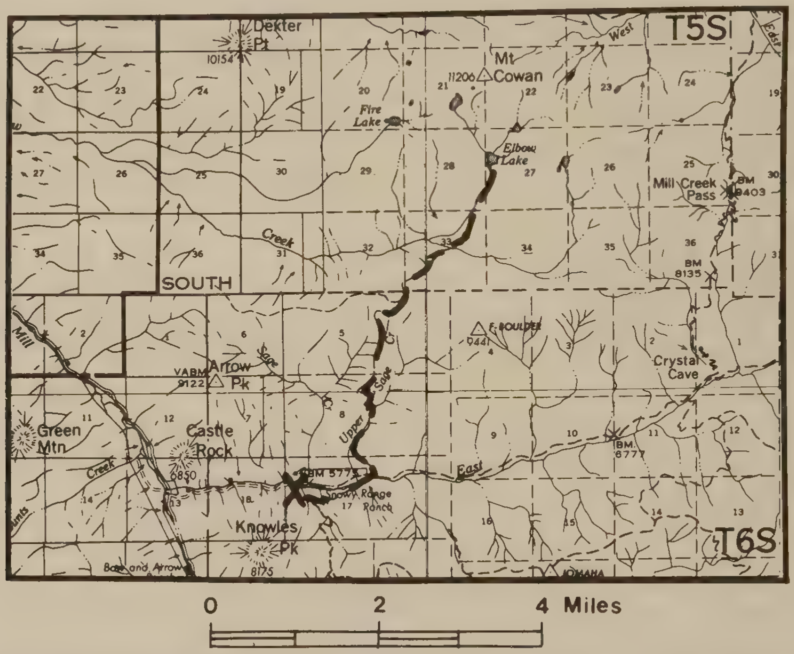
After the trail crosses Sage Creek, it starts an unrelenting climb, switchbacking up and across a dry hillside. You probably will want to carry water on this stretch. Otherwise, there is plenty of water along the trail even in late August. Check with the Forest Service about snow conditions before trying an early summer trip.

Elbow Lake is about nine miles from the trailhead. You need to gain almost 3,500 feet of elevation, making this a tough hike for all but the well-conditioned. Start early and plan to make the entire hike in one day as good campsites are non-existent along the way.

Camp at the lower end of Elbow Lake or just below the outlet. Fishing may produce some cutthroat. Explore the nearby nameless lake to the northeast by following the stream that enters Elbow Lake's east side. Incidentally, the unnamed lake has no fish but some nice campsites. And for spectacular views of Mount Cowen, hike up the little valley on the east side of Cowen to the top of the ridge. You may spot some mountain goats as well.

Mount Cowen does lure a fair number of climbers, but do not attempt it unless you know what you are doing. Unlike most of the other peaks in the Absaroka Range, this massive pinnacle is not a walk-up.—*Art Foran*

HIKE 109 *ELBOW LAKE, MOUNT COWEN*


T5S
T6S
Dexter Pt
10154
Mt Cowan
11206
Fire Lake
Elbow Lake
West
East
Mill Creek Pass
BM 9403
BM 8135
Creek
SOUTH
Mill
Creek
Arrow Pk
VABM 9122
Castle Rock
6850
Green Mtn
Upper Sage
BM 5777
Snow Range Ranch
Knowles Pk
8175
Bow and Arrow
E. Boulder
9441
Crystal Cave
BM 6777
East
OMAHA
0
2
4 Miles

HIKE 110 *LAKE PINCHOT*

General description: A week-long backpacking vacation.
General location: 50 miles south of Big Timber, in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.
Maps: Mount Douglas and Cutoff Mountain USGS Quads, and the Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Map (south half).
Difficulty: Moderate up Rainbow Creek; difficult up Upsidedown Creek.
Elevation gain: 2,824 feet.
Elevation loss: 240 feet.
Season: July through September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Big Timber Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Box A, Big Timber, MT 59011, or call (406) 932-5155.

The hike: Reaching Lake Pinchot and investigating the nearby treasures of the Lake Plateau region of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness is more than a hike. Actually, it's more like a vacation.

Don't even think about hiking into this area and out the next day. Instead, plan on at least a two-day stay as well as two days to get in and out. Bring plenty of food, because once you're there, you'll probably decide to stay at least a week.

The trailhead is at Box Canyon Guard Station, forty-nine miles south of Big Timber on the Boulder River Road (#298), of which the last twenty-four miles

Wounded Man Lake in the Lake Plateau section of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Bill Schneider photo.

are bumpy and dusty. Park in the lot provided and take Trail #27, which is marked "Rainbow Lakes twelve miles."

The trail gradually climbs through timber and open parks along the East Fork of the Boulder River for about 3.5 miles before crossing a sturdy bridge. If you started late, you may wish to stay the first night at an excellent campsite just before the bridge.

After crossing the East Fork, the trail follows the river for a quarter-mile before climbing away through heavy timber. Along the river, you'll notice several trout-filled pools, so be prepared to fight off temptations to stop and rig up your fly-casting gear.

After two more miles, Trail #27 goes straight toward Slough Creek Divide. You turn left on Trail #28.

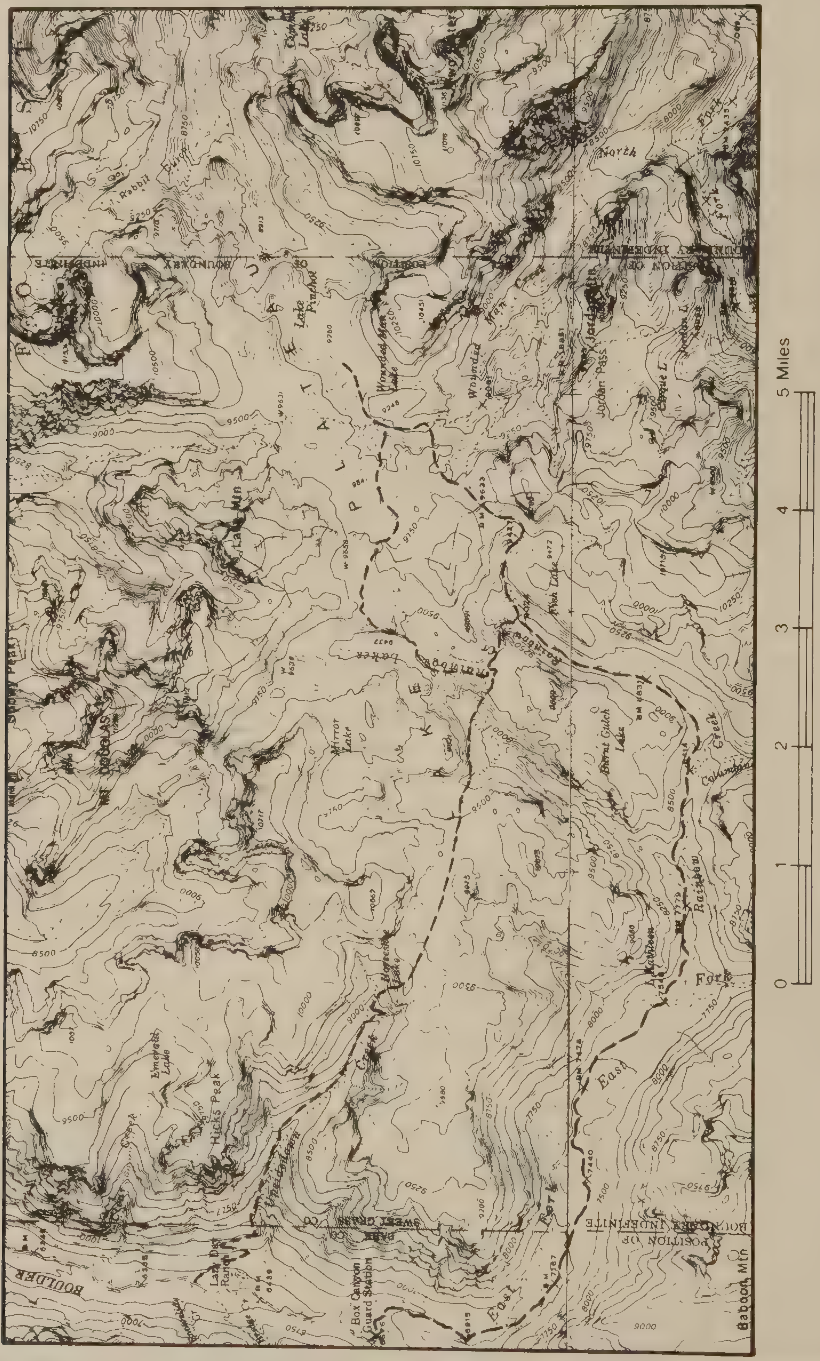
About two hundred yards after the junction, you pass little Lake Kathleen on your left. Then, two miles later, you reach another junction, where Trail #30 breaks off to the right and heads for Columbine Pass. You stay left on Trail #28.

Just before you reach the next junction, you have two options, depending on how tired you are and where you intend to camp: (1) go straight for another two miles over the Stillwater Divide to Lake Pinchot. This also takes you past 9,472-foot Fish Lake, which is also a good campsite; (2) turn left and switchback up a steep hill one mile to Rainbow Lakes.

Lake Pinchot is probably the best choice for a base camp for such an extended trip. However, the immediate area has hundreds of excellent campsites along the lakes. You might choose to make a temporary camp and look for a site that is especially appealing.

Once you've established your base camp, start taking advantage of the

HIKE 110 *LAKE PINCHOT*


Lake Pinchot
Wounded Man Lake
Wounded Man Cr
Jordan Pass
Jordan L
Cirque L
Fish Lake
Rainbow Lakes
Mirror Lake
Burnt Gulch Lake
Rainbow Creek
Columbine
Kathleen L
East Fork
North Fork
Rabbit Gulch
Lake Mtn
Horseshoe Lake
Emerald Lake
Hicks Peak
Lake Dot Ranch
Box Canyon Guard Station
Sweet Grass Co
Park Co
Boulder
Baboon Mtn
Plateau
Position of Boundary Indefinite
5 Miles
4
3
2
1
0

numerous adventures all around you. For anglers, there are two dozen lakes within the reach of an easy day hike. For climbers, there are 11,298-foot Mount Douglas, 11,153-foot Chalice Peak, and other summits to reach.

Most of the lakes have rainbow trout or hybrids. Fish Lake contains cutthroat. Although a few lakes are barren, most have good fishing with some rainbows over two pounds.

On the way home, take the trip between Lake Pinchot and Rainbow Lakes. In addition to passing by Wounded Man Lake, you go through a collection of gem-like lakes on an alpine plateau. It's only a two-mile hike. The trail is heavily used and signed, but it doesn't show on the maps. It leaves the main trail on the northwest corner of Wounded Man Lake and comes out between Middle and Upper Rainbow lakes.

To avoid returning to your vehicle on the same trail, you can take the Upsidedown Creek Trail that can be found at the foot of Lower Rainbow Lake. This route may be slightly shorter, but it involves steep, downhill hiking after a 600-foot climb. The trail hits the Boulder River Road about two miles north of Box Canyon Guard Station.

The only unpleasant part of this hike is the first day—hiking twelve to fourteen uphill miles with a loaded pack. If you endure this, however, you will almost certainly say the trip was worthwhile.

This area is about as heavily used as any hiking area in Montana. But the large number of campsites dilutes the crowd to a tolerable level.

The climate in this high country often leaves something to be desired, with rain fairly common. So bring good rain gear. The climate also restricts the hiking season to about one month—the last week in July and the first three weeks in August. Before this time, expect to be hiking through last year's snowbanks. After it, be prepared for early snowstorms.

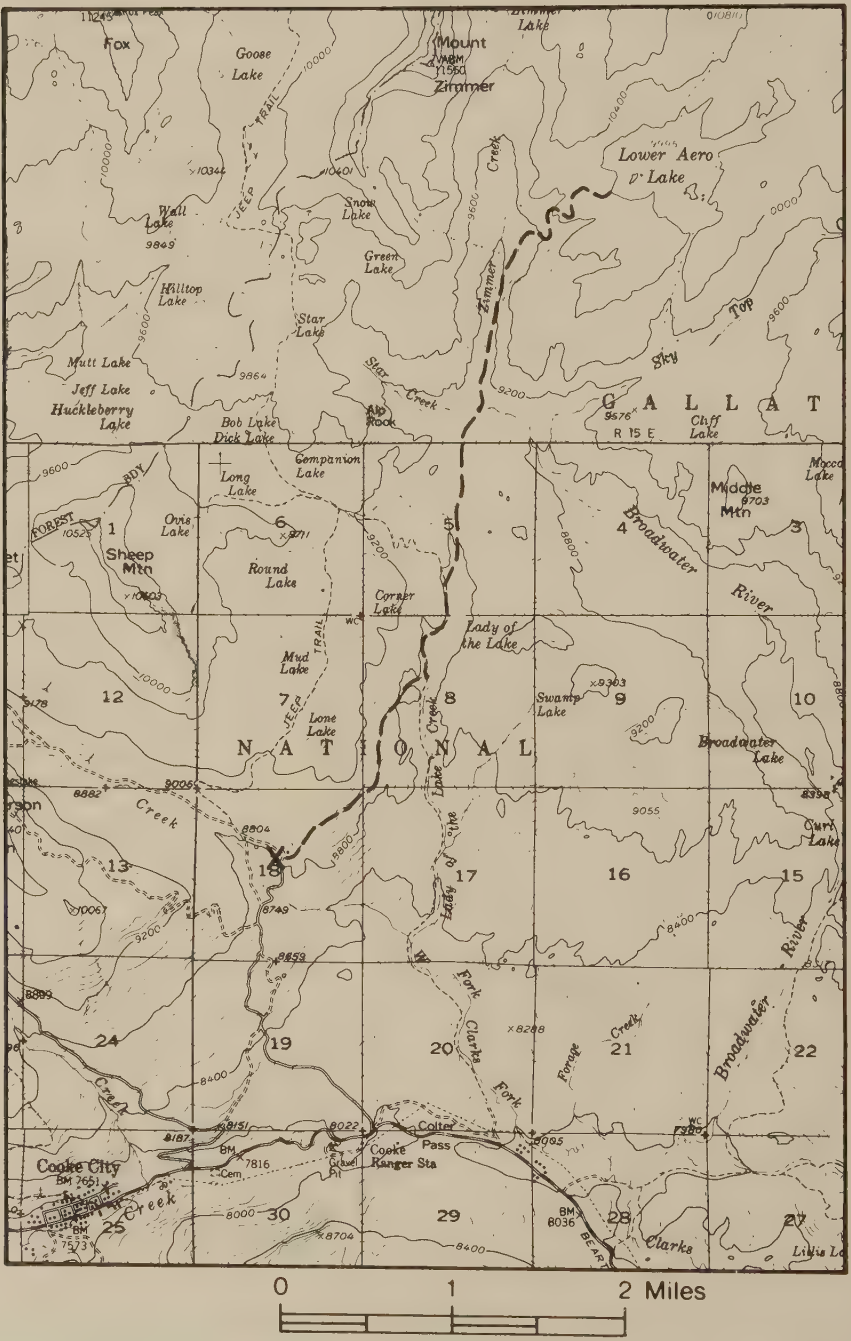
A week in this hiker's wonderland will undoubtedly be a memorable vacation. So expect a few remorseful moments when you realize that you must return to your hectic lifestyle back home. For the first days at home, civilization will never have been so unpleasant.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 111 *AERO LAKES*

General description: A strenuous day hike or moderate overnighter to two high-altitude lakes with outstanding fishing.
General location: 3 miles northeast of Cooke City near the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park.
Maps: Cooke City USGS Quad and the Custer National Forest Map (Beartooth Division), even though this hike is in the Gallatin National Forest.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain: 1,246 feet.
Season: Late July through August.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Gardiner Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Box 5, Gardiner, MT 59030, or call (406) 848-7563.

The hike: The Beartooth Plateau—now part of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness—is the second largest contiguous area in the United States that is more than 10,000 feet in elevation. It is dotted by hundreds of lakes ranging

HIKE 111 *AERO LAKES*


Fox
Goose Lake
Mount Zimmer
11550
Zimmer Lake
Lower Aero Lake
10400
10000
TRAIL
JEEP
Wall Lake
9849
Snow Lake
Green Lake
Hilltop Lake
Star Lake
Mutt Lake
Jeff Lake
Huckleberry Lake
9864
Star Creek
Zimmer Creek
Sky Top
Alp Rock
Bob Lake
Dick Lake
G A L L A T
9576
R 15 E
Cliff Lake
9200
9600
Companion Lake
Long Lake
FOREST BDY
10525
Sheep Mtn
Ovis Lake
Round Lake
Corner Lake
Middle Mtn
9703
Broadwater River
Lady of the Lake
Mud Lake
Lone Lake
Swamp Lake
9303
Broadwater Lake
N A T I O N A L
8882
9006
8804
Creek
8749
8659
10067
9055
8400
8800
Lady of the Lake Creek
W. Fork Clarks Fork
Forage Creek
8288
Broadwater River
8899
Creek
8187
8151
8022
Colter Pass
9005
Cooke Ranger Sta
BM 7816
Cem
Gravel Pit
Cooke City
BM 7651
BM 7573
Creek
8000
8704
8400
BM 8036
BEAR
Clarks
Curl Lake
8398
Mocco Lake
1
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
12
13
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
24
25
27
28
29
30
0
1
2 Miles

in size from potholes to major lakes such as the Aero Lakes.

To reach the trailhead from Cooke City, drive east on U.S. Highway 212 two miles to a turnoff marked with a large Forest Service sign as the Goose Lake jeep road. Drive northeast about two miles up this dirt road to a cluster of old buildings. An inconspicuous trailhead on the right shoulder of the road has an old Forest Service sign directing you to Lady of the Lake. This is also the trail to Aero Lakes.

Once at Lady of the Lake (1.5 miles from the trailhead), turn left and walk up the meadow on the north side of the lake where two trails depart. The left trail heads north and then turns west to Long Lake. You take the right trail, which leads almost due north one mile to the junction of Star and Zimmer creeks. Continue north along Zimmer Creek another mile until you see a crude trail switchbacking up the steep right side of the canyon. If you are following Zimmer Creek and see a stream coming in from the left, you have gone too far up the drainage.

The scramble up the switchbacks is steep but short, requiring good physical conditioning. Suddenly you emerge from the timber and stand above Lower Aero Lake. Be sure to notice the dramatic contrast between the treeless ridge and plateau, and the timbered country just below.

It's about five miles into Aero Lakes. The trail isn't shown on the USGS maps, but it's fairly obvious on the ground because of the fairly heavy use it receives.

The shoreline around Lower Aero is rocky and punctuated with snowbanks. There are a number of places to camp, but perhaps the best is on the grassy north side where a point juts out into the lake. Don't expect a campfire on this treeless site.

To proceed to Upper Aero Lake, follow the stream that connects the two lakes. Another good camping spot is just below the outlet of the upper lake. This provides a good view of the lake and prominent Mount Villard with its spiny ridges. It also makes a good base camp for fishing both lakes and for exploring east to Rough Lake and then north up the Sky Top Lake chain.

Fishing is one of the prime reasons for coming to the Aero Lakes. The fishing here, as in most mountain lakes, is tempermental, but both lakes offer outstanding chances to catch fish in large numbers and sizes. Upper Aero Lake has cutthroat, while Lower Aero has both cutthroat and brook trout. The lakes are stocked every four years and thus have two age classes of fish—the young, upcoming trout and the lunkers.

At this altitude, the summer season is very short; ice may not free the lakes until mid-July. Because the tundra is quite wet on the plateau, there tends to be a prodigious number of mosquitoes when the wind isn't blowing. Bug dope is mandatory until the first hard frost.

Enjoy the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness for what it is—wild and spectacular. At Aero Lakes, you're at least five miles from the nearest machine. At night, no city lights or heavy auto fumes block your view of the stars. There are nearly a million acres of pristine land around you, more than enough for a lifetime of wandering.—*Mike Sample*

HIKE 112 *ROCK ISLAND LAKE*

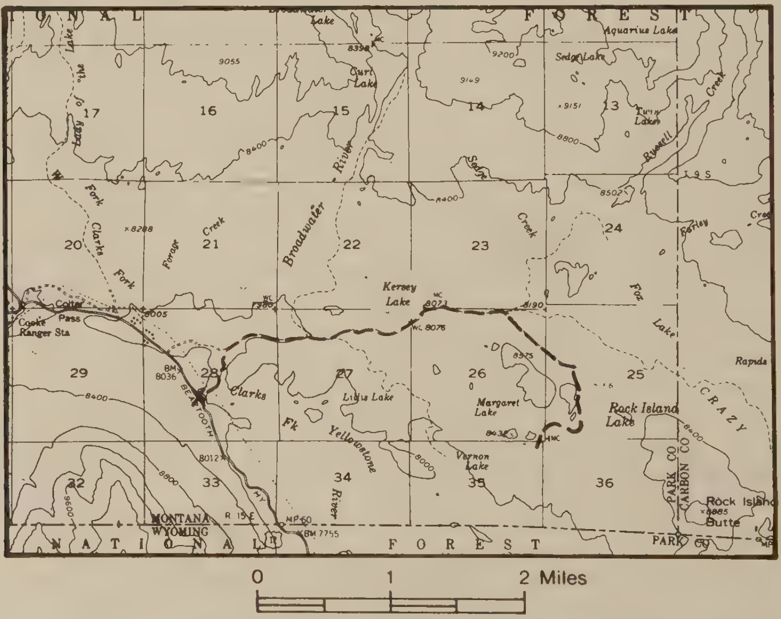
General description: An easy day hike or overnighter.
General location: 10 miles east of Cooke City, just north of the Montana-Wyoming border in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.
Maps: Cooke City USGS Quad and the Custer National Forest Map (Beartooth Division), even though this hike is in the Gallatin National Forest.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 400 feet.
Season: July through August.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Gardiner Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Box 5, Gardiner, MT 59030, or call (406) 848-7563.

The hike: Rock Island Lake differs from many high-elevation lakes. Instead of forming a small, concise oval in the end of a cirque, it sprawls in every direction. You'll tire simply trying to walk all the way around it.

Take U.S. Highway 12 east of Cooke City and turn left onto Forest Service Road #306. Trail #3 takes off to the right about a mile up the road. Follow this trail past Kersey Lake to its junction with Trail #565, which leads to Rock Island Lake.

If you plan an overnight stay, the lake has good campsites—two choice spots are on the south shore east of a section of rocky shoreline. The lake contains large brook trout that—like most big fish—take patience and skill to catch.

HIKE 112 *ROCK ISLAND*



NATIONAL
FOREST
Lake
Lady of the Lake
17
16
15
14
13
9055
8398
Curl Lake
Lake
9200
9169
Aquarius Lake
Sedge Lake
9151
Twin Lakes
8800
8400
Russell
Creek
T 9 S
Fork
Clarks Fork
River
Broadwater
Soda Butte
Creek
8502
8400
8288
Forage Creek
20
21
22
23
24
Farley
Creek
Colter Pass
Cooke Ranger Sta
8005
7980
Kersey Lake
8073
8076
8190
Fox Lake
Rapids
29
28
27
26
25
BM 8036
BEARTOOTH HY
Clarks Fk Yellowstone River
Little Lake
8375
Margaret Lake
8432
Rock Island Lake
CRAZY
8400
8000
Vernon Lake
8012
8800
9600
32
33
34
35
36
PARK CO
CARBON CO
Rock Island Butte
8865
MONTANA
WYOMING
R 15 E
MP 60
BM 7755
PARK CO
0
1
2 Miles

The selection of side trips in this area is incredible. You can go in for a day or stay a week, going to a new lake or seeing new sights every day.

Because Rock Island Lake is so accessible—seven miles round-trip on a near-level trail—it's a perfect choice for a family planning to try out the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Drinking water is readily available on the trail and at the lake, but the mosquitoes are bad in early summer. Although you could find enough wood for a campfire at the lake, consider using a stove for cooking. The area receives heavy use, and if every hiker had a fire, the area would soon show signs of overuse.—*Bill Schneider*

HIKE 113 *TEMPEST MOUNTAIN, GRANITE PEAK*

General description: A long, steep backpack to Tempest Mountain, a traditional launching point for ascents of Montana's highest peak, Granite Peak. Strictly for experienced, well-conditioned hikers.
General location: In the heart of the Beartooth Mountains 80 miles southwest of Billings.
Maps: Alpine and Cooke City USGS Quads, and the Custer National Forest Map (Beartooth Division).
Special attraction: An excellent chance to view or climb Montana's highest mountain, 12,799-foot Granite Peak.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 5,600 feet (to plateau).
Season: August to Mid-September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Beartooth Ranger District, Custer National Forest, Route 2, Box 3420, Red Lodge, MT 59068, or call (406) 446-2103.

The hike: You have a choice of two trailheads for this hike. Both are found by driving south from Columbus on Montana Highway 78 and after fourteen miles taking a left (still on MT 78) at Absarokee. A few miles out of Absarokee, the road forks.

For the most commonly used route, turn right at the fork, drive one mile west of Fishtail, and take the left fork of the road up the West Rosebud drainage. The trailhead is next to the Mystic Lake power plant.

The second trailhead can be found by continuing south on MT 78 from Absarokee to the town of Roscoe. Several miles south of Roscoe, turn right onto the East Rosebud Road (#177) and drive about ten miles farther. The Phantom Creek trailhead departs from the right side of the road, about a mile before the road ends.

Either trailhead gets you to the same place—the saddle between Prairieview Mountain and Froze-to-Death Mountain. The Mystic Lake route is two miles shorter with four hundred feet less elevation to gain, but it includes a very steep series of switchbacks. The East Rosebud route has a less steep gradient, more scenery, and potential campsites for hikers who don't wish to get to the shoulder of Tempest Mountain in one day. Either way, this hike is definitely for rugged types; just reaching the saddle where the two trails meet is a climb of 3,500 feet from Mystic or 3,900 from East Rosebud Lake.

Once at the saddle, turn southwest and follow a series of cairns around the north side of Froze-to-Death Mountain. The destination is an 11,600-foot

Granite Peak, the highest summit in Montana. Mike Sample photo.

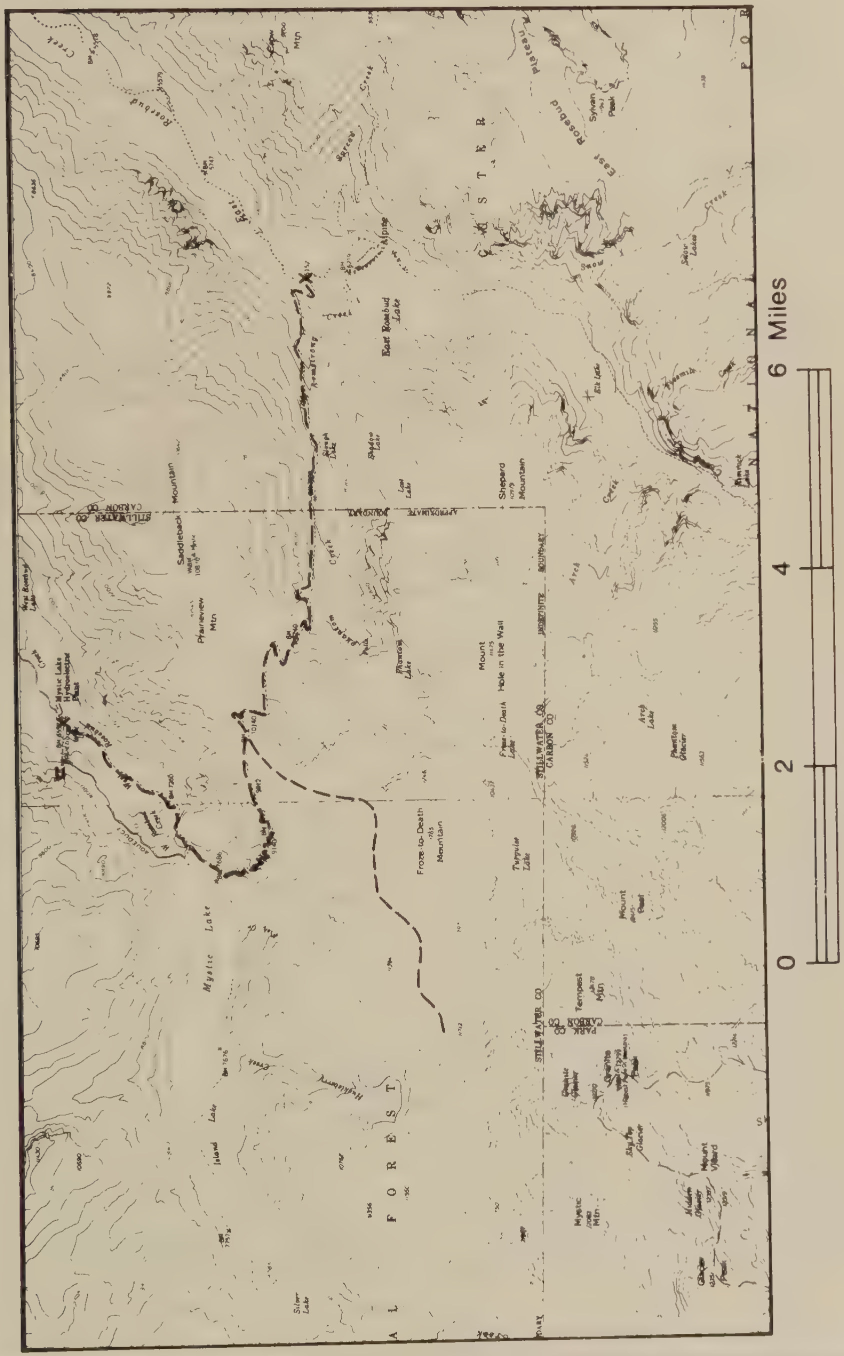
plateau on the west edge of Tempest Mountain, 1.6 miles north of Granite Peak.

In past years, hikers have built rock shelters (rock walls about three feet high) on the west edge of Tempest Mountain to protect themselves while camping from the strong winds that frequently blast the area. Each year, the Forest Service has had to remove them because the area is designated as a wilderness area and a ''no trace'' attitude is recommended for this austere area.

By the time you reach the plateau, you'll have traveled approximately ten miles from the trailhead and climbed more than 5,000 feet. You crossed timberline just before reaching the saddle. No plants or grasses can survive the climate and elevation at the plateau except hardy lichens. Rock, ice, and sky are the predominate elements.

There are some advantages to hiking and camping in such an austere place.

HIKE 113 *TEMPEST MOUNTAIN, GRANITE PEAK*


Saddleback Mountain
Prairieview Mtn
Mystic Lake
Mystic Lake Hydroelectric Plant
West Rosebud Lake
Island Lake
Silver Lake
Froze-to-Death Mountain
Froze-to-Death Lake
Mount Hole in the Wall
Phantom Lake
Slough Lake
Shadow Lake
East Rosebud Lake
Shepard Mountain
Turquoise Lake
Tempest Mtn
Mount Peal
Granite Peak
Mount Villard
Mystic Mtn
Arch Lake
Phantom Glacier
Elk Lake
Snow Lake
Sylvan Peak
Rimrock Lake
East Rosebud
Plateau
STILLWATER CO
CARBON CO
PARK CO
APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY
INDEFINITE BOUNDARY
CUSTER NATIONAL FOREST
0
2
4
6 Miles

The wind is so prevalent that few mosquitoes ever attempt takeoffs from ground zero. The bear danger is nil. And, of course, the high altitude grants superb views in all directions.

Along the west edge of the plateau leading up to Tempest, the view of Granite Peak is awesome. Granite buttresses rise almost vertically from the Huckleberry Creek Canyon to form a broad wall nearly half a mile wide. The north face is heavily etched with fissures running almost straight up between the buttresses. Granite Glacier clings to the center of the wall. At the top, a series of pinnacles builds from the west side up to the peak.

To those who are skilled in technical climbing, Granite is an easy ascent in good weather, but for those with little experience, it is dangerous. Probably the best advice is to go with someone who knows what he's doing and who has the proper equipment. Especially important is a good climbing rope for crossing several precipitous spots. The easiest approach is across the ridge that connects Granite to Tempest and then up the east side.

Check with the Forest Service for more information before attempting this climb. In recent years, not one summer has passed without mishaps and close calls, mostly due to bad judgment. One sobering concern is the extreme difficulty in rescuing an injured person from Granite.

People have tried this hike and climb at almost all times of the year, but August and early September are the most logical choices. Even then, sudden storms with sub-zero wind chills are a real possibility. Snow can happen anytime. And the thunderstorms around Granite Peak are legendary. Be prepared with warm and windproof clothing and preferably a shelter that will hold together and stay put in strong wind.

Whether or not you climb Granite, take the time to walk up to the top of Tempest. To the north and 2,000 feet below are Turgulse and Froze-to-Death lakes. On a clear day, you can see perhaps one hundred miles out onto the Great Plains. And if you move a little east toward Mount Peal, you can look southwest over Granite Peak's shoulder to Mount Villard and Glacier Peak, both over 12,000 feet.

As you might guess, there is little wildlife at this altitude. Nearer the saddle, where there's grass and other hardy alpine plants, mountain goats are commonly spotted. An occasional golden eagle soars through this country looking for marmots and pikas. Down closer to the trailheads, a few mule deer and black bears make their summer homes.

If you use the East Rosebud trailhead, you may wish to take an alternate way back. From the east edge of the plateau to the west-northwest of Turgulse Lake, you can drop down into the bowl that holds Turgulse and hike past Froze-to-Death Lake and Phantom Lake (good fishing for cutthroat) and then cross the hill back to rejoin the trail above Slough Lake. There is no trail for most of this route, and some investigating between Froze-to-Death and Phantom may be necessary, but it is an interesting way out for the adventurous. And high adventure is what this hike is all about in the first place.—*Mike Sample*

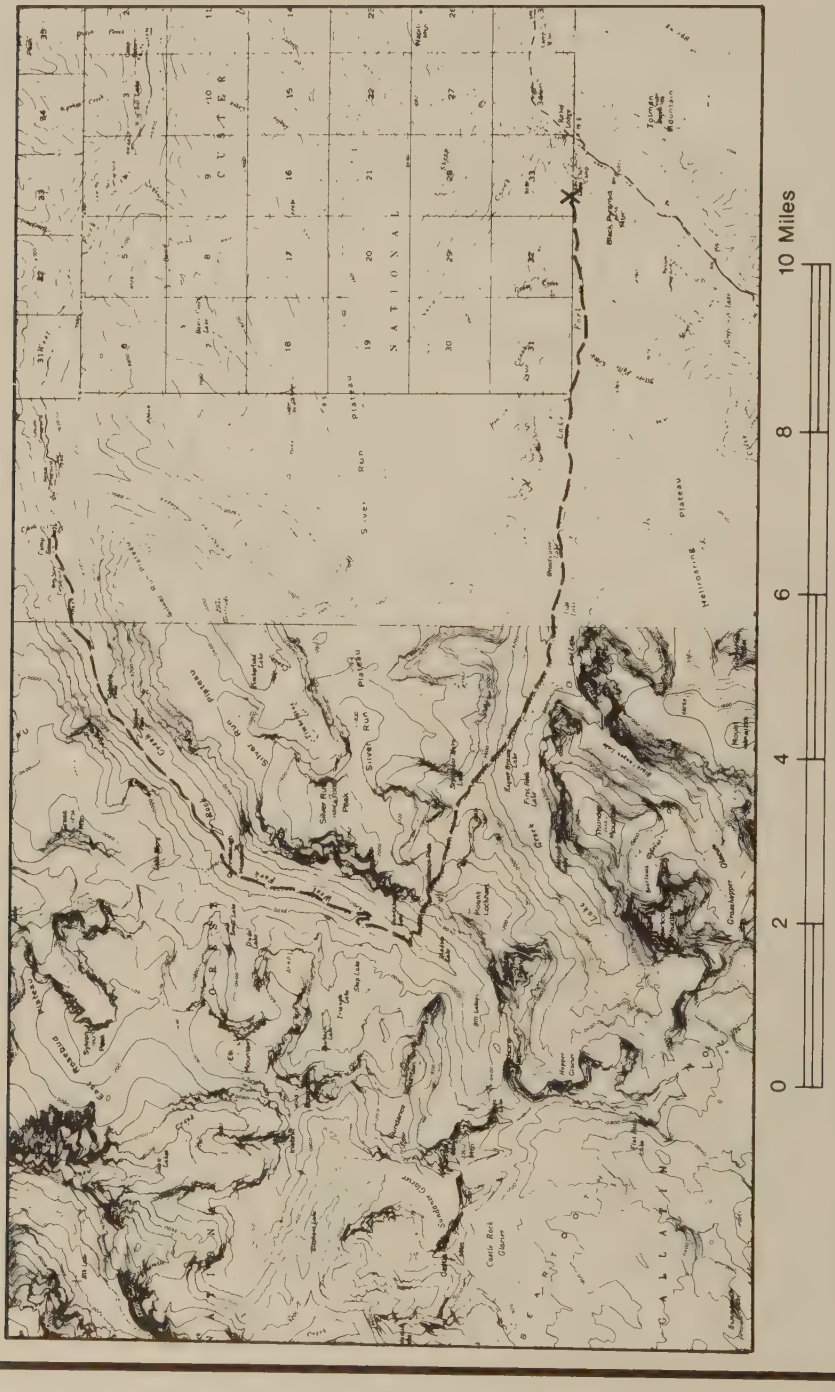
HIKE 114 SUNDANCE PASS

General description: A fairly rugged, 3-day hike for more experienced hikers.
General location: On the northeast side of the fabulous Beartooth Range, about 10 miles southwest of Red Lodge.
Maps: Alpine and Mount Maurice USGS Quads, and the Custer National Forest Map (Beartooth Division).
Special attractions: Spectacular mountain scenery, especially the view from Sundance Pass, and excellent fishing.
Difficulty: Difficult.
Elevation gain: 3,900 feet.
Season: Mid-July to September.
For more information: Write District Ranger, Beartooth Ranger District, Custer National Forest, Route 2, Box 3420, Red Lodge, MT 59068, or call (406) 446-2103.

The hike: In addition to being one of the choicest backpacking trips in the Beartooth Mountains, the Sundance Pass hike is only a short drive from the Billings area.

Keyser Brown Lake from the Sundance Pass trail. Forest Service photo.

HIKE 114 SUNDANCE PASS


C U S T E R
N A T I O N A L
F O R E S T
B E A R T O O T H
G A L L A T I N
Silver Run Plateau
Silver Run Peak
Hellroaring Plateau
Mount Lockhart
Thunder Mountain
Tolman Mountain
Black Pyramid Mtn
Castle Rock Glacier
Sundance Glacier
Grasshopper Glacier
Elk Mountain
Rock Creek
West Fork
Lake Fork
Rosebud Plateau
0
2
4
6
8
10 Miles

Find the trailhead by taking U.S. Highway 212 southwest from Red Lodge for about ten miles. Take a right at the Lake Fork of Rock Creek. A short, paved road leads to a turnaround and the trailhead.

This is a fairly difficult, twenty-one-mile, point-to-point hike that ends at Camp Senia in the West Fork of Rock Creek just south of Red Lodge. You gain 3,900 feet in elevation from beginning to end. Most hikers who take this trip arrange for somebody to pick them up at Camp Senia, or they leave a vehicle there.

Although many hikers take three days for this trip, it can easily be extended by taking scenic side trips. The main route passes by three lakes—Keyser Brown, September Morn, and Sundance—but several others can be the targets of side trips.

One of these is Black Canyon Lake, which lies just below Grasshopper Glacier and is a short side trip. The trail to Black Canyon Lake is a rough but short hike, about 1.5 miles. Part of it is rock talus with no trail, and there is a steep climb as you get close to the lake. The hike to Black Canyon is probably too tough for families or poorly conditioned hikers. There is almost no place to camp at this high, rugged lake—only a few marginal places on the lower end. Campfires are not allowed. Fishing for large cutthroat can be great, but you have to hit it just right. It's usually very windy at Black Canyon during midday.

First and Second Rock lakes can be reached by a fisherman's trail from Keyser Brown Lake. Dude Lake is one mile via a rough, steep trail from Quinnebaugh Meadows. And there's a steep but good trail from Quinnebaugh Meadows to Lake Mary. Occasionally, the saddle to the north of Lake Mary is used as a cross-country route to Crow, Sylvan, and East Rosebud lakes.

Lost Lake is a steep, quarter-mile climb from the main trail. This is a very heavily used lake, and it shows it. The trail to Lost Lake leaves the main trail about half a mile before it crosses the Lake Fork of Rock Creek, the same place where the Black Canyon Lake Trail takes off.

The lakes along the main route and on the side trips offer good fishing, mostly for pan-sized trout. Fishing seems best in Black Canyon and Dude lakes, with the former having large—but hard to catch—cutthroat trout. Stream fishermen often try their luck in Lake Fork and West Fork of Rock Creek, but it's poor fishing for small trout.

It's best to wait for this hike, as Sundance Pass usually isn't snow-free until July 15. This delay also avoids the peak season for mosquitoes and no-see-ums, which can be quite bad in this area, especially on the West Fork side.

Besides superb fishing, the hike has spectacular scenery. From Sundance Pass, for example, you can see 12,000-foot mountains and the Beartooth Plateau, the largest contiguous area above 10,000-feet in North America. You're also treated to glaciers and obvious results of glaciation, exposed Precambrian rock, and waterfalls.

You have a good chance of spotting wildlife, particularly pikas, ground squirrels, and marmots. Also watch for mountain goats, deer, golden eagles, and gyrfalcons. Goats are frequently seen from First and Second Rock lakes. An occasional black bear will be spotted, but bear danger is very low.

As with wildlife, wildflowers are present, but not terribly abundant. Fireweed, stonecrop, bluebells, and four o'clocks are some of the most common species.

Water is plentiful except near Sundance Pass. And the trail is well-marked and maintained throughout the hike.

The main route has several good campsites: Keyser Brown Lake and September Morn Lake (both heavily used, but good fishing for pan-sized trout), Sundance Lake (lightly used with no fish, but very scenic view of 12,548-foot Whitetail Peak), Quinnebaugh Meadows (poor fishing, but great view of 3,000-foot cliff off Silver Run Plateau), and any number of places along the Lake Fork or West Fork of Rock Creek. Camping or campfires are not allowed within two hundred feet of any lakeshore or one hundred feet of any stream in these drainages.

Since this area is part of the Beartooth Wilderness, motorized vehicles aren't allowed. The entire drainage is probably used as heavily as any wild area in Montana. Consequently, the Forest Service has hired a ranger to enforce several protective measures such as the prohibition against camping on lakeshores. These special regulations are listed at a sign on the trailhead. Obey them for two reasons—they are strictly enforced, and they are necessary to protect this fragile drainage.—*Mike Sample*

HIKE 115 *SPOGEN LAKE LOOP*

General description: A 3- to 4-day loop on the Beartooth Plateau.
General location: In the Beartooths along the Wyoming border just southwest of Red Lodge.
Maps: Beartooth Butte, Castle Mountain, Silver Run Peak, and Muddy Creek USGS Quads and Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Map.
Special attractions: Scenic lakes filled with trout.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Elevation gain/loss for loop: 1,170 ft.
Season: Late July through August.
Information: District Ranger, Gardiner Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 5, Gardiner, MT 59870, or call (406) 848-7375.

The hike: Reach the trailhead by taking the Clay Butte turnoff on the Beartooth Highway, U.S. Highway 212, about twenty miles east of Cooke City. Turn left on a dirt road and drive for three miles to the trailhead. Ample parking space is available. Begin on Trail #614.

The hike begins with a gradual climb about three miles long through an open meadow with a view of the Beartooth area. As the trail approaches a drastic turn to the east, an ambitious person can continue north across a small "pass" in the hills to Native Lake. This will cut time and distance off the hike. But the less adventurous hiker can follow the trail around the hill, turning left on Trail #619. The first significant natural feature is Native Lake. Ample camping spaces are available here.

Trail #619 passes just west of a set of larger lakes, right next to each other. The larger one, Box Lake, is at a much lower elevation than the smaller one, an unnamed lake. Box lake contains small brook trout. Although you may glimpse big fish swimming along the shore of the unnamed lake, they are difficult to hook. But there is no problem finding a camping spot or wood for a fire here.

Past these lakes, the trail goes up the first steep hill before dropping down to Mule Lake. According to the *Beartooth Fishing Guide*, there are more brook trout here. Camping at this lake is not a problem. Just over the ridge, the trail comes to Thiel Lake. It first appears through the trees on the left, or west, side of the trail as you descend along a stream. This lake has been overrun by horses. Although it is possible to camp here, it is not half as pleasant as the campsites that are a short jaunt farther up to Hidden Lake.

The trail to Hidden Lake turns right, heading east off the main trail at the creek that flows along the bottom of the ridge. The trail goes east and uphill about a mile until it reaches the lake. A good solid place for a tent is harder to find than earlier, but the lake is nice enough to warrant the extra effort. The waters are inhabited by cutthroat trout. Most of them are small to medium sized, but be careful, for an occasional big one roams these mountain waters.

Regardless of which lake you might stay at, continue north on the main trail. At this point, the trail goes up a big, steep, long hill. This is the hardest part of the whole hike, so do not be too discouraged. After the hill, however, it levels out and heads for Spogen Lake.

Spogen Lake is beautiful, and Spogen falls are about as massive a falls as a hiker can find at 9,000 feet elevation in Montana, although the falls are not the majestic cascades of water to send postcards home about. Spogen Lake lies in the middle of an area with two other beautiful lakes, Wright Lake to the northeast and Whitcomb Lake to the southwest. All of these lakes are scenic, have plenty of camping spots, and are filled with small brook trout.

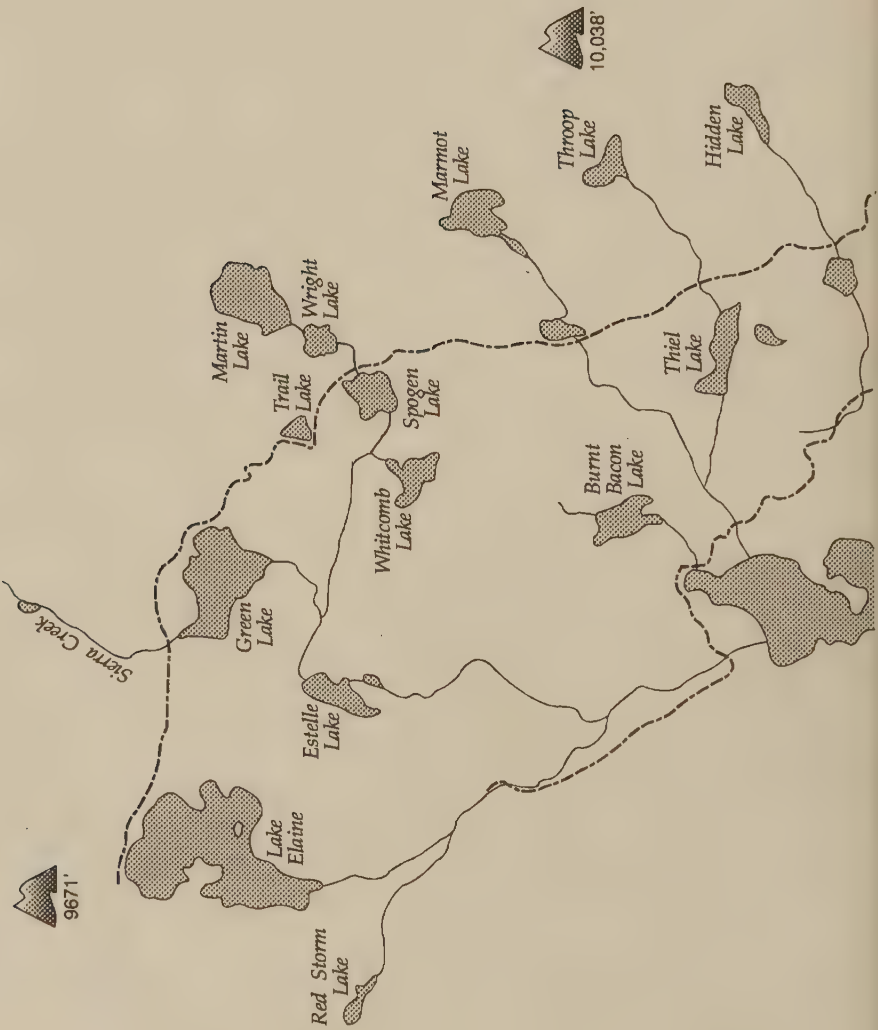
The trail continues on past an unnamed lake, supposedly harboring cutthroat trout, and drops almost straight down to Green Lake. Some maps have the trail ending here, but a trail continues across the north shore where it heads for Lake Elaine. One must be careful near the western end of the Green Lake not to lose the trail because it becomes faint. Head west down to Lake Elaine, navigate the rocky northern shore and just past the inlet join well-maintained Trail #568, going south to Granite Lake.

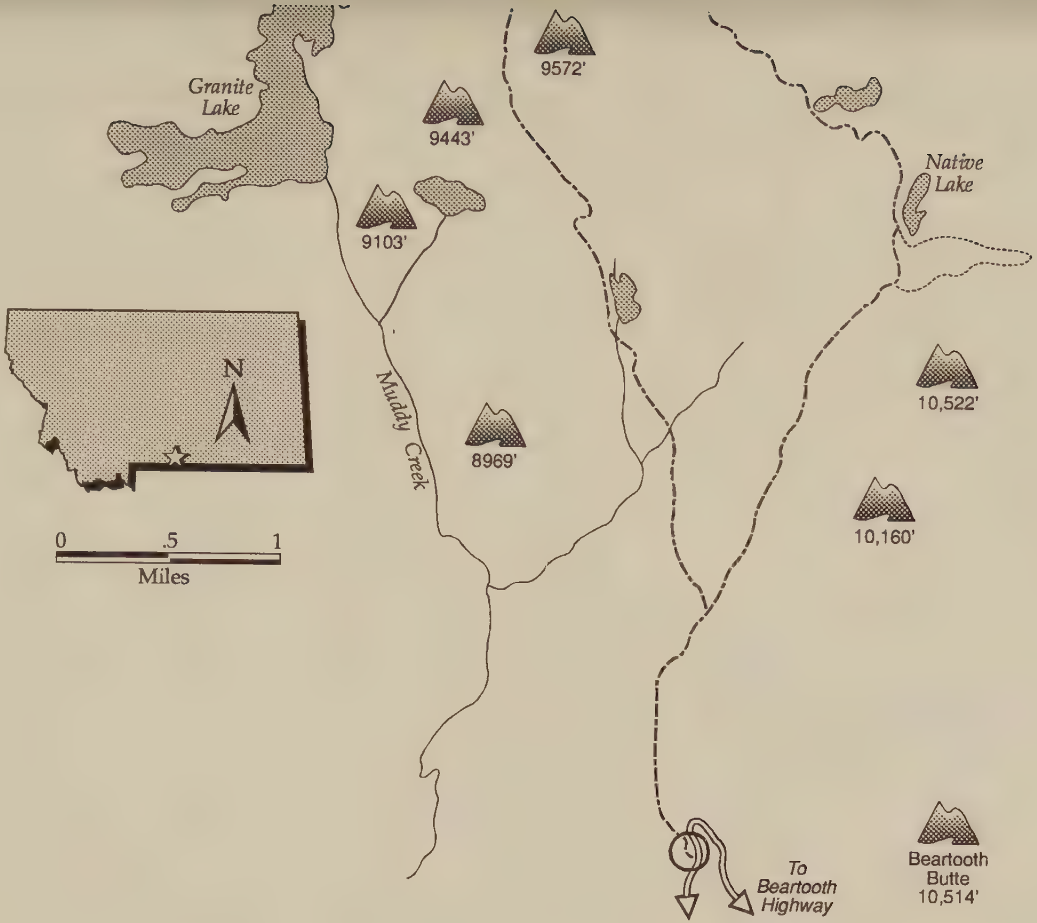
Granite Lake is a huge lake. If the first view of this lake makes you want to stay, there is also a wonderful camping spot. There are lots of fish in Granite Lake, mostly brook trout of small size, but occasionally a larger one will rise for a resourceful fisherman.

After Granite Lake, the hike finishes off by taking the trail east around the lake and heading up a gradual grade back to the trailhead. Herds of cattle are often found in the last few meadows.

This hike can be a long, relaxing trip for hikers that want to take it easy and see the sights. Most of the lakes offer camping. Of course, any ambitious hiker can travel the whole loop in a few days, because there are not actually that many miles involved. As a final note remember that this is the Beartooths, and you will be at a high elevation, so be prepared for the worst weather. The chances of getting four or five sunny, cloudless days in a row up in the Beartooths are slim.—*Greg Schneider*

HIKE 115 *SPOGEN LAKE LOOP*


10,038'
Hidden Lake
Throop Lake
Marmot Lake
Wright Lake
Martin Lake
Trail Lake
Spogen Lake
Thiel Lake
Burnt Bacon Lake
Whitcomb Lake
Green Lake
Sierra Creek
Estelle Lake
Lake Elaine
9671'
Red Storm Lake


Granite Lake
9443'
9572'
9103'
Native Lake
N
0
.5
1
Miles
Muddy Creek
8969'
10,522'
10,160'
To Beartooth Highway
Beartooth Butte 10,514'

Eastern Montana

Overview

The hills of eastern Montana, covered with prairie grass and sagebrush, represent an entire different environment from the coniferous forests of the northwest. Antelope, mule deer, wild turkey, and sage grouse roam the grassy slopes seeking cover under sparse ponderosa. Areas like the Sweetgrass and Ekalaka hills present dots of forest in a sea of grass. In this vast and arid land, the few rivers are like long thin oasis for wildlife.

Wilderness in eastern Montana might not fit the common stereotype, but places like the Tongue River and Pryor Mountains deserve wilderness designation as much as any western part of the state. Eastern lands are included in the latest wilderness bill.

HIKE 116 *BITTER CREEK BADLANDS*

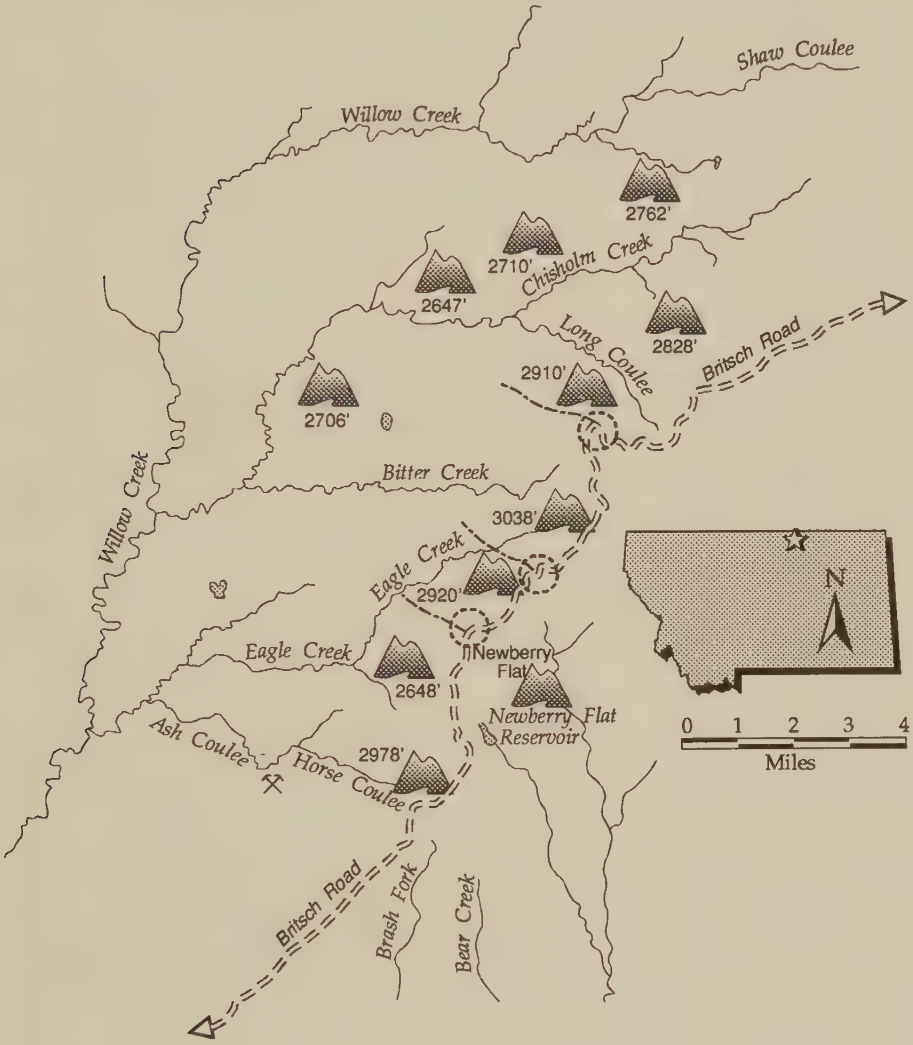
General description: A cross-country day hike in the open prairies of the Bitter Creek Badlands.
General location: 15 miles southwest of Opheim.
Maps: Bureau of Land Management Map metric topographic map for Opheim.
Special attractions: A spectacular prairie badlands area in northeastern Montana that is one of the largest remaining roadless areas of the Great Plains. You will encounter petrified forests, shale badlands, juniper-shale dunes, and incredible sunsets in this unique area.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Season: Year-round except during periods of heavy snowfall.
Information: Bureau of Land Management, Valley Resource Area, Rt. -1-4775, Glasgow, MT 59230, or call (406) 228-4316.

The hike: To reach this area, drive west of Glasgow on U.S. Highway 2 until five miles before Hinsdale, then turn north on Britsch Road (Directly opposite Vandalia Road). Follow Britsch Road for seventeen miles. A high clearance vehicle is recommended although not necessary if the roads are dry. The roads are impassable if wet. Park your vehicle in a very conspicuous spot on the top of the escarpment along the eastern boundary of the area so that you can see it from a distance.

Bitter Creek encompasses an area of more than 60,000 acres. The eastern portion is the most spectacular due to the badlands and juniper-shale dune. You can pick your own route with a map and compass. Hiking is cross-country, since no trails exist. Bitter Creek has wide open expanses making it difficult to get lost.

The Bitter Creek badlands supports mixed grass prairie wildlife, including deer and antelope. Sharp-tailed grouse thrive in the brushy coulees, and sage grouse dwell in the silver sage areas and benchlands. You might even see a prairie falcon. The Bitter Creek area is considered an excellent wildlife viewing area.

HIKE 116 *BITTER CREEK BADLANDS*


Shaw Coulee
Willow Creek
2762'
2710'
Chisholm Creek
2647'
2828'
Long Coulee
Britsch Road
2910'
2706'
Bitter Creek
3038'
Willow Creek
Eagle Creek
2920'
Eagle Creek
Newberry Flat
2648'
Newberry Flat Reservoir
Ash Coulee
Horse Coulee
2978'
Britsch Road
Brash Fork
Bear Creek
N
0 1 2 3 4
Miles

Bitter Creek is great for day hikes to week-long backpack trips. Water, however is scarce so make sure you carry all that you need.—*Kirk Koepsel*

HIKE 117 *STRAWBERRY HILLS*

General description: A short day hike in an area of buttes and badlands.
General location: 8 miles east of Miles City.
Maps: Government Hill USGS Quad and BLM Edition 1:00 000 Surface Management Status of Miles City Map.
Special attractions: Pretty prairie scenery among the wooded plateaus of southeastern Montana.
Difficulty: Easy.
Elevation gain: 350 feet.
Season: May through October.
For more information: Write the Area Manager, Powder River Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management, Miles City Plaza, Miles City, MT 59301, or call (406) 232-7000.

The hike: Hiking opportunities on the scattered tracts of public land in eastern Montana are limited; that's why this hike among the badlands south of the Yellowstone River is such a pleasant surprise to people looking for an easy outing on the Montana prairies.

Drive east from Miles City on U.S. Highway 12 for about eight miles, until the highway begins to ascend the pine-covered plateau just east of the town. As the road climbs Government Hill, turn off to the left at the sign for the Strawberry Hills Recreation Area.

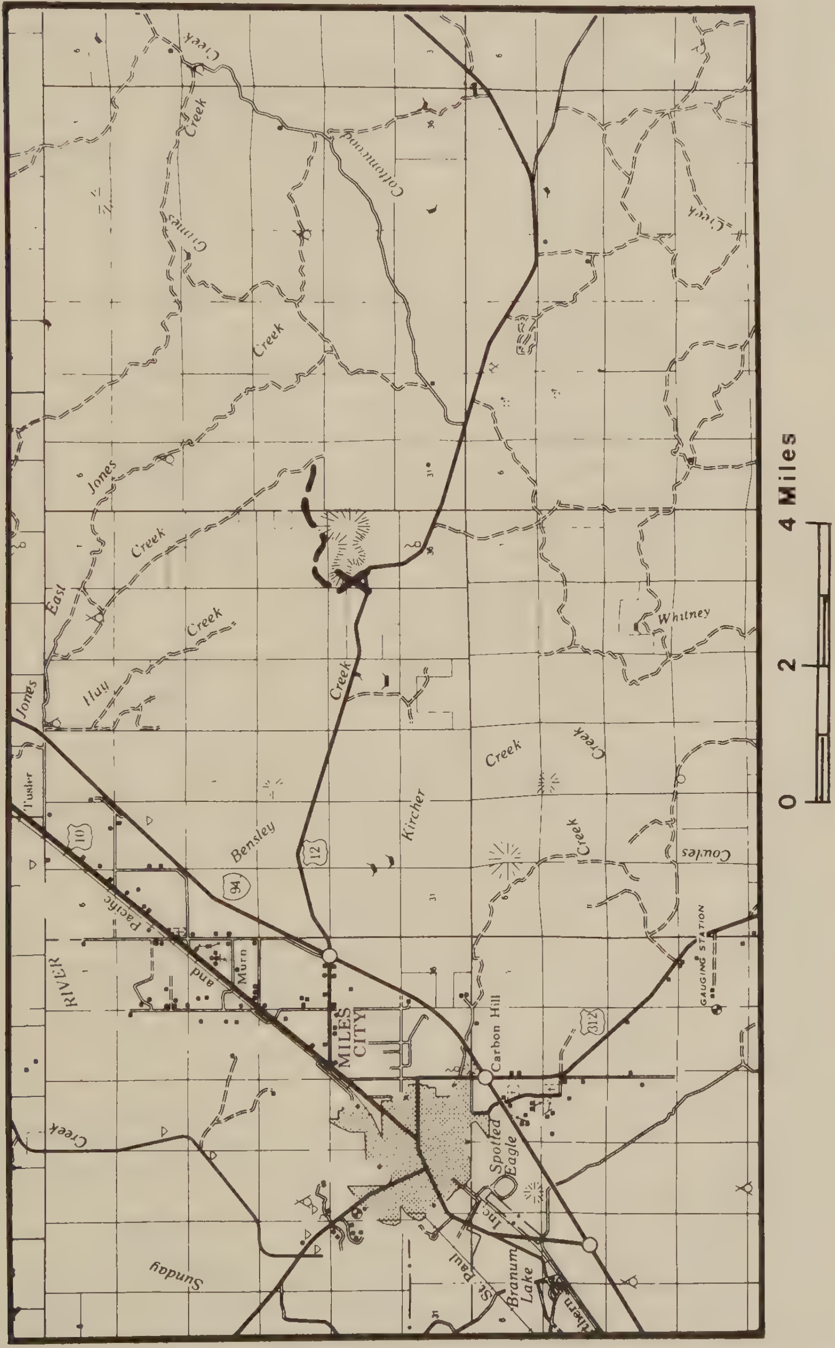
Past the parking area, the trail (in the form of a rough jeep track) steeply climbs the western flank of Strawberry Hill. A quarter-mile from the trailhead, the route goes through a gate. Once past this point, you have escaped most of the people that bother to drive out to the Strawberry Hills.

The route wanders seemingly aimlessly through the eroded basin on the north side of Strawberry Hill. Here, you have a choice of three interesting destinations for your wandering. The low ridges to the north provide good views of the valley of the lower Yellowstone River, with pine-covered plateaus appearing to float on the summer heat waves on the far horizon. Just pick out a grass-covered slope that isn't too steep and head for the top, keeping one eye out for the small prairie rattlers that frequent these hills. Bring your snakebite kit.

The rock formations that make up these buttes are sure to prompt you to examine them more closely. The red layer of rock, from which the Strawberry Hills get their name, is sometimes called "clinker" and was theoretically formed when underlying coal seams caught fire, baking the upper layers of sedimentary rock. Upon closer examination, the rock is not uniformly red but has streaks of gray, blue, and black scattered on a freshly broken surface. Rockhounds will enjoy puttering about the clinker layers, but avoid the crumbly cliffs, which offer poor rock climbing and razor sharp handholds.

By picking a route to the south, you can climb up onto the pine- and meadow-covered summit of Strawberry Hill itself. The meadows are particularly pretty

HIKE 117 *STRAWBERRY HILLS*



Creek
Creek
Cottonwood
Grimes
Creek
Creek
Jones
Creek
East
Creek
Hay
Jones
Tusler
Whitney
Creek
Creek
Creek
Kircher
Bensley
Creek
Cowles
10
94
12
312
Pacific
and
Murn
RIVER
MILES CITY
Carbon Hill
GAUGING STATION
Spotted Eagle
Inc
St. Paul
Branum Lake
Creek
Sunday
0
2
4 Miles

in April and May, when springtime moisture encourages the prairie's brief show of pasqueflowers and arrowleaf balsamroot.

Continuing along the rough jeep track for about a mile, you'll eventually come to a spectacular red-topped conical butte. You can climb this butte on its eastern ridge. It provides intriguing views of the broken country across the Yellowstone River to the north.

After doing as much or as little wandering about the prairie as you like, retrace your steps to the parking area and your vehicle.

Spring or fall is best for this prairie walk, since summer is often brutally hot in eastern Montana. Make sure to bring adequate water along, because none is available in the Strawberry Hills area.—*Ed Madej*

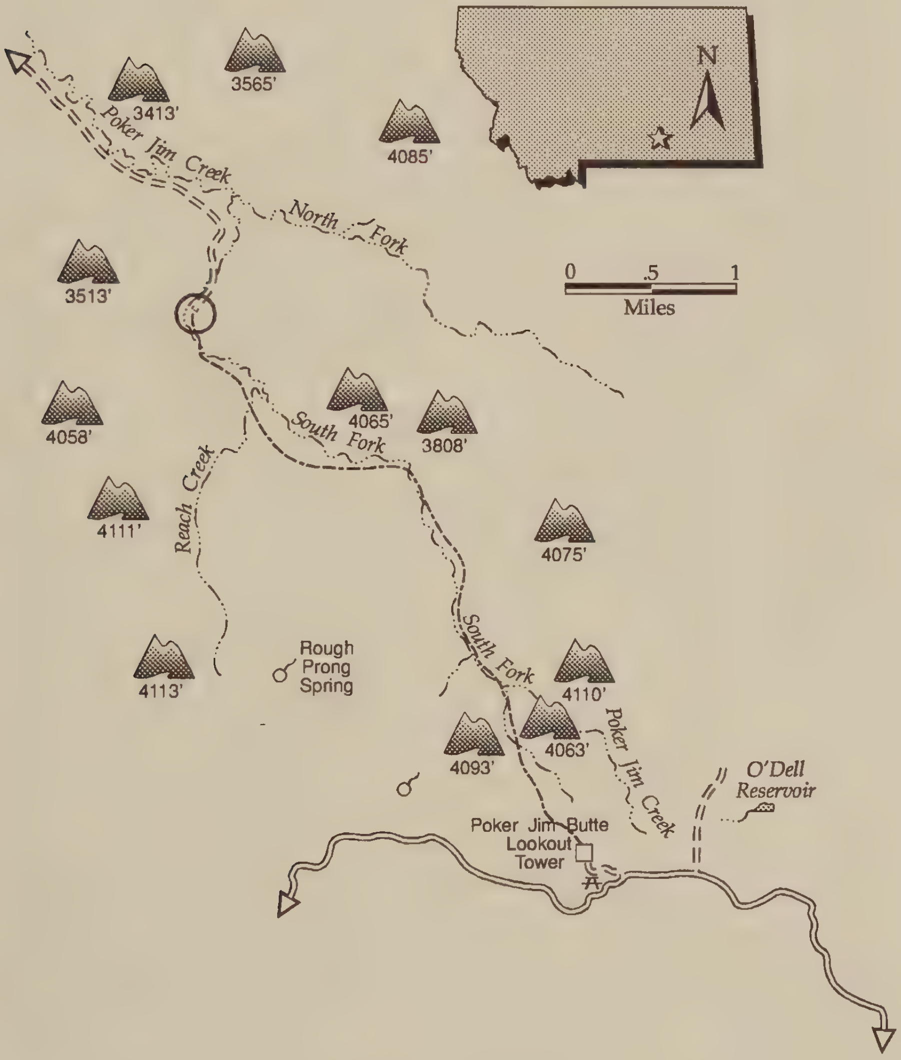
HIKE 118 *TONGUE RIVER BREAKS*

General description: A 7-mile point-to-point hike in an area of lush ponderosa pine forest and loads of wildlife.
General location: 5 miles north of Birney near the Tongue River.
Maps: Poker Jim Butte, Browns Mountain, Birney Day School USGS Quads and Custer National Forest Map, Ashland Ranger District.
Special attractions: Ponderosa pine covered hills, with interesting rock hoodoos, deer, and wild turkey.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Season: Mid-May through October.
Information: District Ranger, Ashland Ranger District, Custer National Forest, P.O. Box 168, Ashland, MT 59003, or call (406) 784-2344.

The hike: To reach this area, drive south of Ashland on the Tongue River Road for about twenty-five miles to the intersection with the highway to Lame Deer. Turn left (southeast) on Poker Jim Creek Road. Drive for about two miles, or until the road becomes impassable and park.

To make this a point-to-point hike, leave a car at Poker Jim Butte Lookout. This eliminates the return trip along the same trail. To reach the Poker Jim Butte lookout, continue south on Tongue River Road to Birney. Turn left at Birney, continuing south for about two miles and turn left again on the East Fork Road for the Poker Jim Butte turnoff. Turn left (north), and the lookout is farther on the north side of the road. The route is well-marked to Poker Jim Butte Lookout and Picnic Area, just follow the signs. This is also a good place to car camp.

From Poker Jim Creek Road, hike along the South Fork of Poker Jim Creek. There is not a constructed trail, but cow paths exist along almost the entire route. The lower end of the route crosses large open grasslands. It is worth exploring some of the hilly areas off to the north of the creek for weird rock hoodoos. As you ascend the South Fork of Poker Jim Creek valley, you enter thick stands of ponderosa pine. Climbing above the breaks to large open meadows, look for the highest point around Poker Jim Butte. Climb up the butte to a fire lookout for great views of the Tongue River Breaks and Bighorn Mountains.


N
0 .5 1
Miles
3565'
3413'
4085'
Poker Jim Creek
North Fork
3513'
4058'
4065'
South Fork
3808'
Reach Creek
4111'
4075'
South Fork
4113'
Rough Prong Spring
4110'
4093'
4063'
Poker Jim Creek
O'Dell Reservoir
Poker Jim Butte Lookout Tower

This area has limited water resources. Bring all the water you need with you. The South Fork of Poker Jim Creek only flows seasonally, and even when it does, the water is not potable.—*Kirk Koepsel*

HIKE 119 *BUFFALO CREEK WILDLANDS*

General description: Access to a little known and wild area in the Powder River Country.
General location: South of Broadus in the southeastern corner of Montana.
Maps: Moorhead USGS Quads and Broadus Recreational Map.
Special attractions: A natural area with unique geologic history and opportunities for wilderness experience away from the crowds.
Difficulty: Moderate.
Season: May through October.
Information: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Powder River Resource Area, Miles City Plaza, Miles City, MT 59301-2844; (406) 232-7000 or 232-4331.

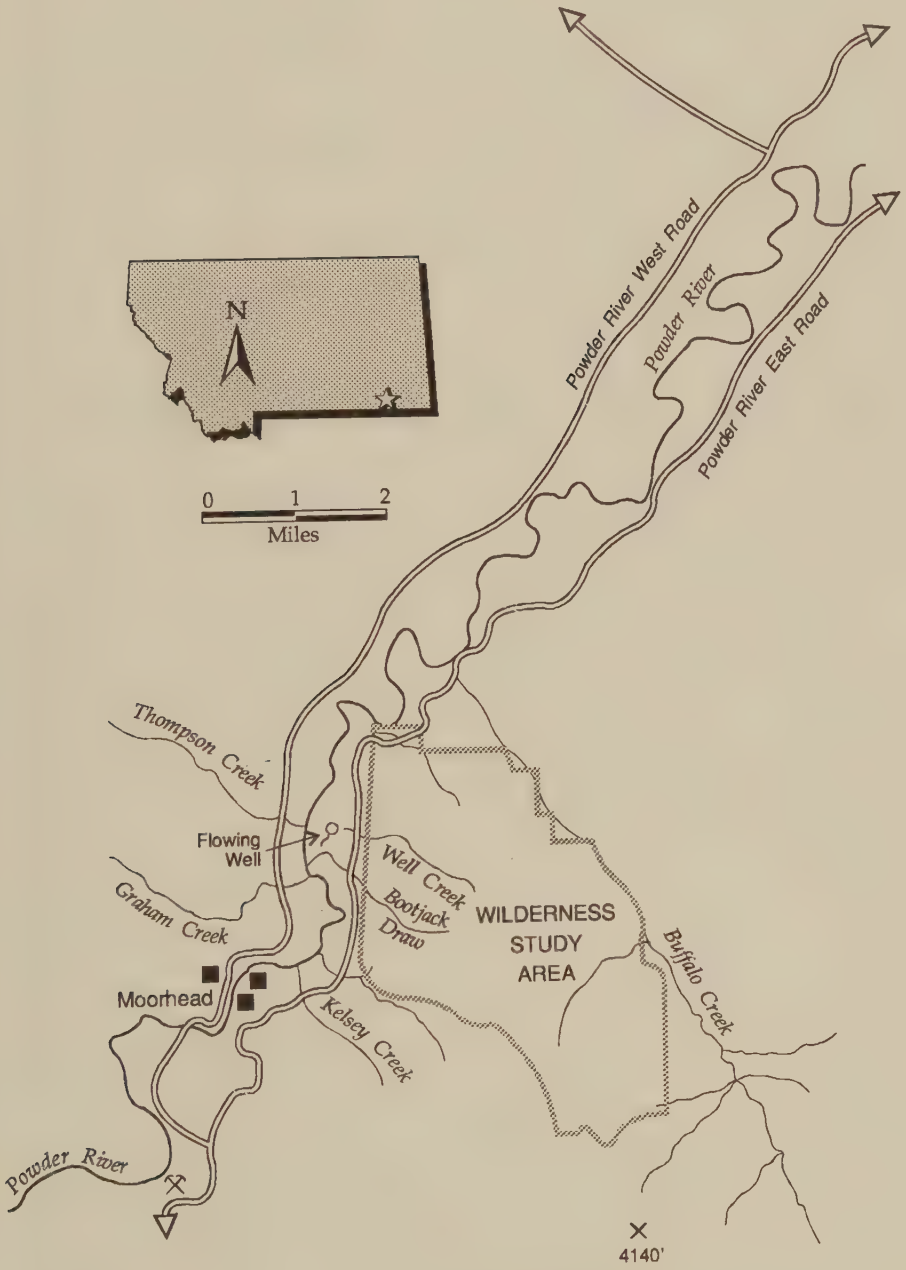
The hike: To reach Buffalo Creek Wildlands, drive south of Broadus along the Powder River East Road, which begins approximately 1.5 miles south of Broadus on U.S. Highway 59. Turn right on the first road heading southwest. The Powder River East Road is an improved gravel road with an all-weather surface. Drivers without a front-wheel- or four-wheel-drive vehicle should exercise caution and limit their travel to dry, sunny days. Heavy downpours can make travel treacherous. The wilderness study area boundaries are marked with brown carsonite posts, which are visible from the road on the south side.

Park at any one of the turnoffs along the road on the south side. No trailhead is listed for this hike. You can park and hike wherever you desire along the Buffalo Creek Wilderness Study Area south of Powder River East Road near Moorhead. There are no established hiking trails within the boundary of Buffalo Creek Wilderness Study Area. Different than structured maintained trails, this area offers freedom on exploration and solitude.

The Buffalo Creek area consists of a north-south trending ridge about 4,100 feet above sea level. Several rugged drainages provide water off the ridge to the Powder River on the west slope and Buffalo Creek on the east slope. These canyons drop about six hundred feet from the rim to the valleys of the boundaries of the unit. In many areas, buttes in the Buffalo Creek area are banded with beds of red "clinker," layers of burned coal deposits and overlying clay layers, which were "baked" when the coal beds caught fire from lightening strikes thousands of years ago.

The area presents ample opportunities for wildlife viewing; raptors and deer are frequently seen. Hikers should be aware that this area is popular with hunters and take adequate precautions if hiking during hunting season. Wear hunter's orange if appropriate.

BLM requests users of this area to practice a "Leave No Trace" policy while hiking. The area was considered for wilderness status because of its beauty, primitive condition, and opportunities for solitude. By carrying out everything packed in, each hiker helps create a unique wilderness experience for everyone.—*Bureau of Land Management*


N
0
1
2
Miles
Powder River West Road
Powder River
Powder River East Road
Thompson Creek
Flowing Well
Graham Creek
Well Creek
Bootjack Draw
WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
Buffalo Creek
Moorhead
Kelsey Creek
Powder River
4140'

HIKE 120 *CAMPS PASS TRAILS*

General description: Three trails perfect for day hiking in country rich with wildlife.
General location: East of Ashland on Highway 212.
Maps: Home Creek Butte USGS Quads and Custer National Forest Map, Ashland Ranger District.
Special attractions: Excellent views of the rolling grass and pine covered hills. The only developed trail in the Ashland Ranger District.
Difficulty: Easy.
Season: Mid-May through October.
Information: District Ranger, Ashland Ranger District, Custer National Forest, P.O. Box 168, Ashland, MT 59003, or call (406) 784-2344.

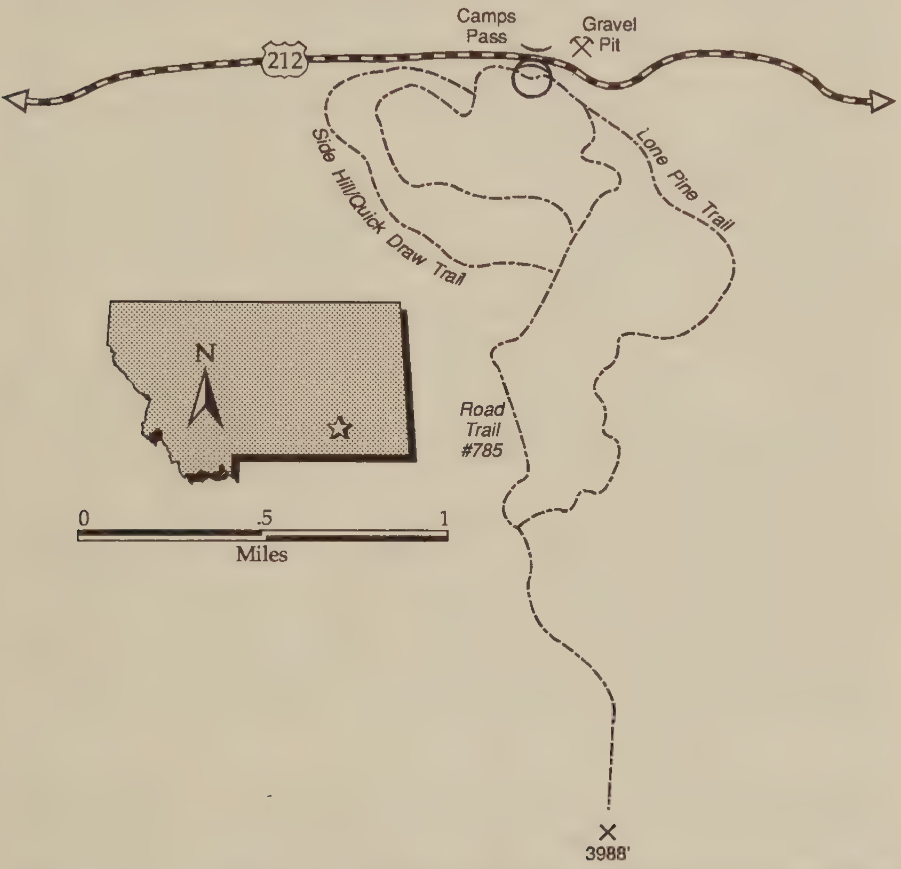
The hike: The Ashland District is in a portion of Montana described as an island of pine in a sea of grass. Trophy mule deer and pronghorn lure hunters to this area. You may also see sagegrouse along the trail. The Ashland Ranger Station welcomes visitors. It is located on the west side of town, south of U.S. Highway 212.

To find the trailhead, drive east from Ashland on U.S. Highway 212 for eighteen miles. The trailhead is signed and is located on the south side of US 212 off Forest Road 785. There is parking at the trailhead. Horses and mountainbikes are allowed but infrequently encountered.

There are three trails in this system. The **Road Trail** is rated as the easiest. It is 2.3 miles long located in gentle terrain with mild inclines. The **Side Hill/Quick Draw Trail** is 1.7 miles long and is more challenging. It has some moderate inclines situated in timbered areas as well as open grasslands. The area supports ponderosa pine, ash, and some willows in the bottoms. The **Lone Pine Trail** is the most difficult of the three trails at 3.7 miles long. Mild to steep inclines will be encountered. These trails are also used for cross-country skiing. So the recommended season is really all year.

This area has limited water sources, so it is best to carry water.—*USDA Forest Service*

HIKE 120 *CAMPS PASS TRAIL*


Camps Pass
Gravel Pit
212
Side Hill/Quick Draw Trail
Lone Pine Trail
N
Road Trail #785
0
.5
1
Miles
3988'

AFTERWORD

The Wilderness Challenge

By Bill Schneider, Publisher
Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc.

Many hikers, I suspect, view the "wilderness challenge" as the adventure of braving wild country with only what they can carry on their backs. They briefly flee the comfortable life to risk survival along some austere divide, and they return home the victor.

We've almost come to consider it our *right* to have the opportunity to visit places on earth that have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, where the imprint of man's hand is substantially unnoticeable.

Yes, we can "challenge" the wilderness. We can climb the highest peak, float the wildest river, seek out the most hidden of the mountain's secrets. In Montana, we can even challenge the mighty grizzly bear, the wilderness king, and temporarily become the most feared creature on the mountain.

This challenge lures us to the blank spots on the map. It seems ingrained in our birthright—and most likely will for generations to come.

But today's hikers face an even more fierce, more difficult, more time-consuming, and more frustrating challenge. Now we must rise to the challenge of saving the last wilderness.

Never has the oft-quoted adage of Will Rogers—"They ain't makin' any more of it."—been so relevant. Another famous thinker, Aldo Leopold, also emphasized the point by writing, "Wilderness is a resource that can shrink, but not grow." How true. But the wilderness must grow to help dilute the rapidly increasing number of hikers.

I suppose the day will come when most wilderness areas have restrictions on the number of human visitors. However, increasing the size of the wilderness resource would certainly make this day a more distant probability.

It's also true that the label "wilderness," when officially designated by Congress, can attract hikers, leading to more crowded conditions. However, limitations on recreational use are undoubtedly preferable to the alternative—gradual destruction.

Knowing this, it hurts to hear politicians talk of "balance" as they prepare to give their guarded support to the destruction of another unprotected roadless area. In the lower forty-eight states, the ratio is now ninety-nine percent nonwilderness to one percent wilderness, as legally defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Yet in almost every speech by wilderness opponents or politicians trying to please everybody, we hear cries for balance. "I'm in favor of wilderness," they predictably say, "but not in this area. We need balance; we can't have all wilderness."

I wonder how many of these podium-thumpers really understand the existing inequity. If every remaining acre of roadless country south of Canada became part of the Wilderness Preservation System (created by the Wilderness Act of 1964), *we wouldn't even come close to* balance. The pitiful one percent might, at best, climb to three percent.

Herein lies our challenge—to make America understand the wisdom of wilderness, to keep the bulldozer out of the last remnants of wild country, to preserve for future hikers a few examples of what the land used to be like.

This challenge can't be taken lightly. Compared to winning congressional protection for a threatened roadless area, climbing the highest peak or surviving the elements is remarkably easy. In a time when economics dictates most decision-making, pleas to designate wilderness aren't always eagerly received. But wilderness can be an economic bonanza to a community. (In Montana, recreation and tourism are the state's third largest industry.)

Claims that wilderness destroys the local economy illustrate only one of the many myths plaguing wilderness preservation efforts. Other myths include: Only the rich, elite, young, and strong use wilderness. Domestic livestock grazing isn't possible or practical in wilderness. Wilderness locks out sportsmen and other recreationists. Wilderness is bad for wildlife. Wilderness isn't multiple-use. Wilderness locks up vital minerals. We have too much wilderness already.

These are pure myths, and quite the opposite is true in each case. So if you're confronted with these false statements, get the facts and set the record straight. Don't let them pass without a reply; there's too much at stake. The integrity of the last American wilderness is on the line. And even more important, the decisions on what to do with the remaining roadless areas will be made in the next few years.

The conservation groups listed at the end of this section—have the facts to support pro-wilderness claims and dispel myths. They even have detailed information on many of the unprotected areas mentioned in this guidebook. Making the decision-makers listen to these facts is your challenge.

I dislike projecting wilderness as a giant battleground. But in reality that's a fair description. The battle over wilderness has been—and will be in the future—as bitterly fought as that over any domestic political issue.

Hikers and other people who use and adore wilderness must be the soldiers in this war. Otherwise the day when the last roadless area is protected as wilderness will soon dawn.

APPENDIX I

Always check the checklist

Hikers can—and will—take almost anything they choose into the mountains. But without a complete checklist it's remarkably easy to forget an essential item. The following list is "over-complete." There are items included on it that hikers rarely use. Still, it's always good sense to take a final look at a checklist before loading the pack into the car. The extra minute is usually worthwhile.

Clothing

________ Shirt
________ Pants
________ Underwear (extras)
________ Windshirt
________ Vest
________ Belt and/or suspenders
________ Jacket or down parka
________ Turtleneck
________ Poncho or rainsuit
________ Gloves
________ Hat
________ Bandana
________ Walking shorts
________ Sweater
________ Swimming suit
________ Balaclava or headband

Shelter

________ Tent
________ Tent poles
________ Rain/storm fly
________ Tent repair kit

Cooking

________ Matches (extras)
________ Matches (waterproof)
________ Waterproof match case
________ Stove/Fuel bottles (filled)
________ Funnel
________ Foam pad for stove
________ Cleaning wire for stove
________ Cleaning pad for stove
________ Cleaning pad for pans
________ Fire starter
________ Cook kit
________ Pot gripper
________ Spatula
________ Cup
________ Bowl/plate
________ Utensils
________ Dishrag
________ Dish towel
________ Plastic bottle

Food and drink

________ Cereal
________ Bread
________ Crackers
________ Cheese
________ Margarine
________ Powdered soups
________ Salt/pepper
________ Main-course meals
________ Snacks
________ Hot chocolate
________ Tea/coffee
________ Powdered milk
________ Drink mixes

Photography

________ Camera
________ Film (extra)
________ Extra lenses
________ Filters
________ Close-up attachments
________ Tripod
________ Lens brush/paper
________ Light meter
________ Flash equipment

Fishing

________ Rods
________ Reels
________ Flies
________ Dry-fly floater (silicone)
________ Lures
________ Leader
________ Extra line
________ Swivels
________ Hooks
________ Spit shot/sinkers
________ Floats
________ Bait

Miscellaneous

________ Pocket or Swiss Army knife
________ Whetstone
________ Compass
________ Topo map
________ Other maps
________ Sunglasses
________ Flashlight Batteries (extra)
________ Bulbs
________ Candle lantern
________ First-aid kit
________ Snakebite kit
________ Survival kit
________ Repair kit
________ Suntan lotion
________ Insect repellent
________ Zinc oxide (for sunburn)
________ Toilet paper
________ Space blanket
________ Binoculars
________ Nylon cord
________ Plastic bags
________ Rubber bands/ties
________ Whistle
________ Salt tablets
________ Emergency fishing gear
________ Wallet/I.D. cards
________ Money
________ Ripstop tape
________ Notebook and pencils
________ Field guides
________ Toothpaste and toothbrush
________ Dental floss
________ Mirror
________ Garbage bag
________ Book
________ Towel
________ Safety pins
________ Scissors
________ Trowel
________ Water purification tablets
________ Car key
________ Signal flare
________ Watch
________ Extra parts for stove, pack, and tent
________ Solar still kit
________ Rubber tubing

APPENDIX II

Finding Maps

For the hikes listed in this book, you basically need two kinds of maps—USGS Quadrangles and various USDA Forest Service maps. The USGS maps can be ordered directly from the Geological Survey's Denver Distribution Center or purchased at various sporting goods, outdoor equipment, and office supply stores throughout Montana. When ordering maps from Denver, be sure to request an *Index of Topographic Maps of Montana.* It's a good idea to have your Quads in hand before you head off for the trailhead.

To order topographic maps from Denver, send a letter to the following address for an index and price list: United States Geological Survey, Branch of Distribution, Federal Center, Building 41, Box 25286, Denver, Colorado 80225.

Forest Service maps can be obtained from the addresses listed along with each hike. If you would like a complete set of maps of the ten national forests and what maps are available of the twelve Forest Service wilderness areas in Montana, write to the following address: United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Region, Federal Building, Box 7669, Missoula, Montana 59807 (Attention: Information Receptionist).

As of 1989, maps of individual national forests and wilderness areas were $2 each, as were national-forest travel plan maps.

For the hikes on Bureau of Land Management land listed in this guide, write to the address listed with each hike or request maps in BLM's National Resource Lands in Montana map series from the following address: United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, 222 N. 32nd St., Box 36800, Billings, MT 59107.

APPENDIX III

Conservation Organizations

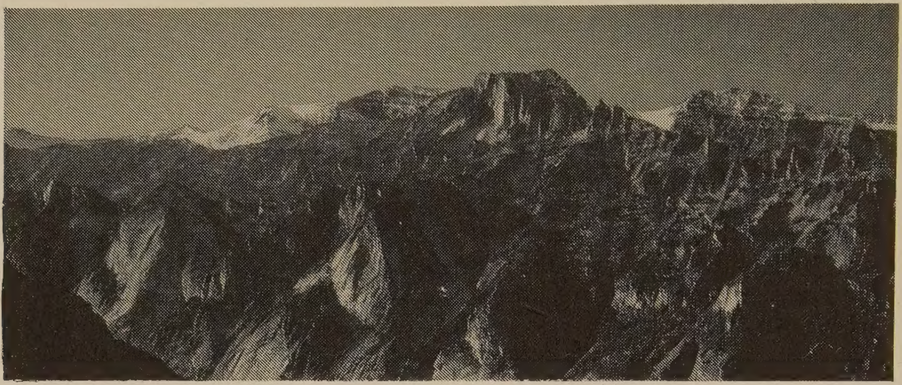
Montana Wilderness Association
Box 635
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 443-7350

Sierra Club
730 Polk St.
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 776-2211

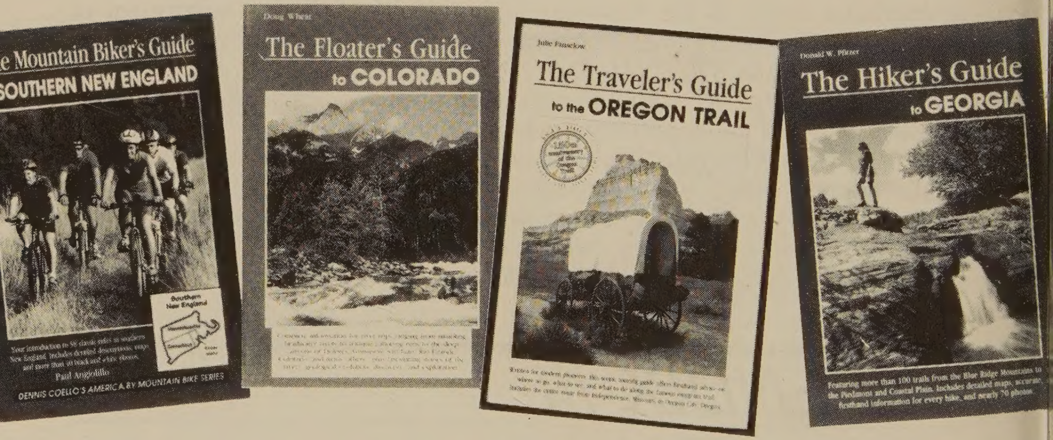
The Wilderness Society
1400 I St. N.W.
10th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 842-3400

Alliance of the Wild Rockies
415 N. Higgins Ave.
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 721-5420

OUT HERE THERE'S NO ONE TO ASK DIRECTIONS



Let Falcon Be Your Guide


e Mountain Biker's Guide
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND
Paul Angiolillo
DENNIS COELLO'S AMERICA BY MOUNTAIN BIKE SERIES
Doug Wheat
The Floater's Guide
to COLORADO
Julie Fanselow
The Traveler's Guide
to the OREGON TRAIL
Donald W. Pfitzer
The Hiker's Guide
to GEORGIA

The **FALCON**GUIDES series consists of recreational guidebooks designed to help you safely enjoy the great outdoors. Each 6 x 9" softcover book features up-to-date maps, photos, and detailed information on access, hazards, side trips, special attractions, and more. So whether you're planning you first adventure or have enjoyed the outdoors for years, a **FALCON**GUIDE makes an ideal companion.

For more information about these and other Falcon Press books,
please visit your local bookstore, or call or write for a free catalog.

Falcon Press • P.O. Box 1718 • Helena, Montana 59624
1-800-582-2665

FALCON

Montana—A backpacker's paradise

For the hiker, Montana probably has more to offer than any other state. There are famous hiking areas such as Glacier National Park, the Bob Marshall, the Beartooth Plateau, and the Mission Mountains. But even more significant are the dozens of hidden, almost unknown mountain ranges and prairie areas with outstanding scenery, fishing, climbing, and other rewards–places where you can hike all day without seeing another person.

The newly revised fourth edition of ***The Hiker's Guide to Montana*** now covers 120 hikes of the well-known and the uncelebrated mountain ranges as well as pristine prairie hiking areas. Also new is a hike description of Mann Gulch, which will help you unravel the mysteries of the 1949 wild fire that claimed the lives of thirteen men, and new sections on hiking with children, barrier-free trails for wheelchairs, and updated information on hiking in bear country. This guide contains accurate, up-to-date trail information, detailed maps, and eye-catching black-and-white photos.

Whether you're looking for an easy family hike within minutes of an urban area or a multi-day backpack adventure in the wilderness, ***The Hiker's Guide to Montana*** is essential for planning your next outing in the Big Sky St

696-BAA-161

ISBN 1-56044-270-0

9 781560 442707

$12.95

FALCON™

A FALCON GUIDE